



Religious  
**Extremism**

Intellectual and Doctrinal Deviance in Islam

**Ayatullah Salehi Najafabadi**

Translated by Dr. Hamid Mavani

هَلَكَ فِي رَجُلَانِ: حُبِّ غَالٍ وَهُبْغِصٍ قَالَهُ اِمَامُ عَلِيٍّ (ع)

"Two categories of persons will face ruin and destruction: he who loves me with exaggeration, and he who hates me intensely."

Extremism in human society constitutes one form of intellectual malady that drags a human being towards degeneration and impedes mental maturity and progress. All forms of extremism and bigotry are harmful and dangerous—extremism regarding our leaders, heroes and pivotal personages; extremism regarding the Messenger (S) and Imams (a) by elevating their status to divinity; belief that the Imams (a) possess limitless knowledge; conviction that the Imams (a) have intuitive knowledge (*al-ilm al-hudun*) regarding all matters that are unseen (*ghayb*) and what is harbored in the minds of people; by means of intuitive knowledge, they know that a particular person is in the state of carrying out a theft or so and so is executing the killing of an oppressed person; belief that the Imams (a) would consume a particular food in spite of the knowledge that it has been poisoned; belief that before an Imam (a) assumes the position of imamate he must be endowed with all the truth and comprehensive intuitive knowledge of the unseen (*ghayb*); belief that there is no difference between God and the Imams (s) when it comes to desiring a thing and having it fulfilled instantly; belief that Jesus (a) and his mother share in the divinity and, as such, people should worship them.

This book has been written with the intention to establish that the kinds of views expressed above are contrary to the faculty of intellect and the religion of Islam. Those who espouse extremist views must strive to forthwith return back to the path that is in harmony with the intellect and Islam. It is my hope that this book will have such an impact and if it does my aim will have been fulfilled.

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Qum, Iran

USD \$9.95

ISBN 978-0-9680868-4-1

50995



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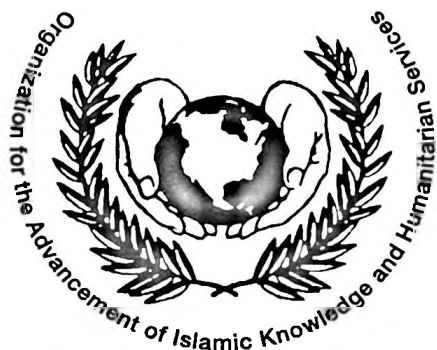
# Religious Extremism

(*Ghuluww*)

## Intellectual and Doctrinal Deviance in Islam

Ayatullah Ne'matollah Salehi Najafabadi

Translated by Dr. Hamid Mavani



Organization for the Advancement of Islamic  
Knowledge and Humanitarian Services  
(O.A.I.K. & H.S.)  
Montreal, Quebec  
Canada

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Ayatullah Ne'matollah Salehi Najafi

Translated by: Dr. Hamid Mavani

Cover Design by: Shahram Ettehad

Published by  
Organization for the Advancement of Islamic Knowledge and  
Humanitarian Services  
(O.A.I.K. & H.S.)  
P. O. Box 786  
Station H  
Montreal, Quebec  
H3G 2M7  
Canada

Email orders: ReligiousExtremism@gmail.com

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ISBN 978-0-9680868-4-1

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### Dedication

To the people with wisdom who traverse on the middle path and who keep away from the polarized ends of extremism and deficiency.

To the discerning and perceptive sagacious ones who view Islam as a religion of moderation and who keep a distance from extremist ideas about the Prophet (S) and the Imams (a).

To the independent and enlightened thinkers who refute extremist doctrines of one who claims that the knowledge of the Imam (a) is boundless and instead affirm that the knowledge of the Imam (a) is limited.

To the insightful and educated ones who refute extremist ideas of those who claim that the Imam (a) possesses intuitive knowledge (*al-ilm al-huduri*) about the entire creation and that their knowledge is identical to that of God. Instead, they affirm that the knowledge of the Imam (a) is acquired (*busuli*) and is limited.

To those who sacrificed throughout history to confront extremism.

And finally, to the extremists about whom we can be optimistic that they will revert back to the path of moderation

Salehi Najafabadi

## Introduction by the Translator

*Ghuluww* is a verbal noun that means "exaggeration" or "extremism" or "to transgress the proper limits." It is derived from Arabic root GH L W. The active participle of this verb, *ghali* (plural: *ghulat*), refers to the practitioner or the person who is imputed with the practice of exaggeration. In its technical sense, the term was used in reference to those who ascribed divine attributes to human beings such as absolute and full intuitive-knowledge (*al-ilm al-huduri*) of the unseen (*ghayb*); manager and supervisor of the creation of God; the Prophet (S) and the Imams (a) being the incarnations of God who are able to instantaneously crystallize whatever they desire on their own accord and will and, finally, Imam Ali (a) being superior to Prophet Muhammad (S). The Imams (a) unequivocally and vociferously objected to these extremist claims and repeatedly asked their followers to dissociate from them and to ask God to remove the exaggerators from the Shadow of Divine Mercy and Grace. To be sure, they denounced and excommunicated those who contrived hadiths ascribing supernatural powers to them such as Bayan b. Sim'an, Mughira b. Sa'id and Abu al-Khattab. Unfortunately, many of these exaggerated reports that had been fabricated by various groups for a variety of reasons, especially to gain power and authority, have crept into our primary hadith sources, such as *al-Kafi*, which venerate the Imams (a) in excess and go so far as to deify them or attribute qualities to them that are reserved exclusively for God.

The term *ghuluww* has undergone an evolution with the passage of time and gradually it was meant to describe any belief system that fell outside the bounds of 'orthodox' Islam.<sup>1</sup> This has been the case for many terms found in the Qur'an and the hadith literature that meant one thing at one time and the meaning was then altered while still preserving the essence of the meaning of the term. A good case in point would be the ritual prayers or *salat* which etymologically in Arabic means blessings or benedictions; however, in the time of the Prophet (S) the term *salat* acquired a specific meaning. The same can be said of other terms such as fasting (*sawm*) and 20 percent religious tax (*khums*) in Shi'i Islam and alms tax of 2.5 percent (*zakat*). Accordingly, it is critical that such words are interpreted in the context of the sentence and the time period in which they were employed and not viewed as being static and operating in a vacuum.

Islam is a religion of balance and moderation that avoids the polarities of excessiveness (*ifrat*) and deficiency (*tafrit*). This is attested to in the Qur'an in an eloquent verse: "We have willed you to be a community of the middle way, so that you may bear witness [to the truth] before others and so that the Messenger may bear witness [to it] before you" (Qur'an, 2:143). However, human beings with all their frailties and shortcomings have fallen prey to this major moral violation of excessive praise or denigration in each period of human history, and our own contemporary period is no exception. This book by Ayatullah Ne'matollah Salehi Najafabadi (d.

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<sup>1</sup> Wadad al-Qadi, "The Development of the term *Ghulat* in Muslim Literature with Special Reference to the Kaysaniyya," in *Shi'ism*, ed. Etan Kohlberg (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003).

2006) has been written with the aim of making us aware of the un-Qur'anic nature of some of our beliefs and practices that we have taken for granted to be correct because of its long history or inherited legacy, without realizing that many of these exaggerated reports were fabricated by persons with ulterior motives and vested interests. There are instances of glaring contradictions between some of the hadith reports and the Qur'an, yet we persist in believing on the reliability of such reports which implies that, in some sense, we are assigning the hadiths a higher order of priority than the Qur'an even while they essentially abrogate the Qur'anic norm. We have been provided with a categorical criterion when it comes to reports that contradict the Qur'anic worldview and that is to instantly discard them without any reservation or remorse: "Do not accept anything that has been attributed to us and is contrary to the teachings of the Qur'an because our traditions (hadiths) are in conformity with the Qur'an and the *sunnah* [of the Prophet]...If someone approaches you and relates hadith reports that are contrary to this then reject him outright."<sup>2</sup>

In our Islamic history, it can be argued that the first group that exhibited the characteristics of extremism (*ghuluww*) in its modified meaning of any ideology that transgresses the boundaries of 'orthodoxy' were the Kharijites (seceders) who splintered away from the group of Imam Ali (a) after the battle of Siffin in 657 C.E. in which they forced Imam Ali (a) to accept arbitration

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<sup>2</sup> Muhammad b. Hasan al-Tusi, *Ikhtiyar ma'rifat al-rijal (Rijal al-Kashshi)*, edited by Mir Damad, Muhaqqiq Baqir Husayni and Sayyid Mahdi Raja'i, 2 vols. (Qum: Mu'assasah Al al-bayt (a), 1983), 2:490.

when the forces of Mu'awiyah, who were on the verge of defeat, raised parchments of the Qur'an on their lances summoning their opponents to let the Qur'an adjudicate their dispute. The shallow and simple-minded followers of the Imam (a) insisted that he accept this call for cessation of conflict even though the Imam (a) warned them not to be duped by this stratagem. Not only that, these fickle-minded and superficial believers did not even agree to the nomination proposed by the Imam (a) to represent them in the deliberations of the arbitration. They were pious devotees who fasted during the day, prayed at night and engaged in rigorous spiritual exercises as a sign of their love and devotion to God, but lacked insight and discernment. At the same time, they had no qualms on passing quick judgments on the soundness of the beliefs of other Muslims. In their opinion, a Muslim guilty of having committed a major sin was to be automatically removed from the orbit of Muslim fraternity (*umma*) and his/her life, no longer inviolable, could be terminated. The peak of their spiritual arrogance can be seen in their assertion and verdict that, God forbid, Imam Ali (a) had become an apostate or an unbeliever for having consented to the cessation of the conflict at the Battle of Siffin between his followers and Mu'awiyah and agreeing that the outcome of the conflict be decided by the arbitrators instead of deciding by way of seeking recourse to the Qur'an—"no judgment but God's" (*la hukm illa li-llah*). In response, the Imam (a) replied: "This sentence is true but it is interpreted wrongly." This inveterate hatred against Imam Ali (a) was the outcome of spiritual arrogance combined with naivety and lack of depth and critical analysis, which led them to be duped into accepting the cessation of conflict when the forces of

Mu'awiyah resorted to the stratagem of hoisting parchments of the Qur'an on their lances in order to avoid a crushing defeat. Mu'awiyah knew quite well that some of the supporters of Imam Ali (a) lacked nuance and sophistication and he exploited their deficiencies. This inability to engage in rational reflection led the Kharijites to battle against Imam Ali (a) and finally three of them converged in the holy precinct of Mecca to hatch out a plot to kill him in a mosque while he was in the state of performing the morning ritual prayers. How incredulous and incredible it is when the sanctuary of refuge and security becomes a sacred space for conspiring to shed the blood of the infallible Imam (a)! This is indeed a perpetual lesson for all of us not to fall into the trap of spiritual arrogance by passing value judgments on the veracity or the soundness of faith (*iman*) of others. This role has been reserved exclusively for God and it would be the height of arrogance for one to arrogate to himself/herself this function of God. Secondly, we need to enhance our religious literacy by cultivating a culture of reading and critical thinking to avoid being ensnared by blind obedience to fallible human beings or doctrines. Blind obedience without any reflection and critical analysis would constitute abandonment of our individual responsibility that can lead to disastrous consequences, as we see today in our world.

The puritanical movement of Wahhabism that began in the eighteenth century and is presently the state religion of Saudi Arabia, has evolved into a form that has many of the ingredients that fall in the category of extremism (*ghuluww*). A recent example to illustrate my point is the statement made by the newly appointed leader of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Sheikh Adil al-Kalbani, who

has ruled that all Shi'i clerics are apostates (*mulhid*) because of slandering the Prophet's companions and his wives: "Indeed, I cannot consider anyone a Muslim who knows the values [for Sunnis] of Abu Bakr and still insults and curses him and warns Muslims against him. He who knows the place of Abu Bakr and does not recognize that he is one of the companions of the Prophet is undoubtedly a heretic, even if he is a Sunni."<sup>3</sup> He exempts the ordinary Shi'is from this harsh verdict on the basis that they are ignorant in understanding the true worth of those personages who are held in high esteem by the Sunnis.<sup>4</sup> It is truly shocking and incredible to find people with such a mindset in the twenty-first century and in an age of globalization where access to information is easily available. On the side of the Shi'is, an example of extremism can be found in the practice of a number of preachers who engage in cursing and ridiculing some of the companions and wives of the Prophet (S) from the pulpit and in return receiving praises and adulations from the listeners. This is, of course, an abhorrent practice that goes against the tenor and the essence of the Qur'an. The late Ayatullahs Husayn Borujerdi and Ruhollah Khumayni along with contemporary prominent Shi'i jurists like Ayatullah Ali Sistani in Iraq have categorically denounced such practices as abominable and have singled them out as the primary cause of fragmentation and enmity amongst the Muslim *ummah*.

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<sup>3</sup> Habib Trabelsi, "Sheikh Kalbani: All Shiite Clerics are Heretics" in *Saudi Wave*, May 6, 2009, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

Ayatullah Ne'matollah Salehi Najafabadi (d. 2006)

Ayatullah Ne'matollah Salehi Najafabadi was born in 1923 in the town of Najafabad, Iran, and commenced his religious studies at the age of fifteen by moving to Isfahan, Iran. After studying Arabic literature, *Sharh-e lum'ah*, *Rasa'il* and *Makasib* under the guidance of Hajj Agha Rahim Arbab, Hajj Shaykh Muhammad Hasan Alim Najafabadi and Agha-ye Fayyaz, he moved to Qum and studied under Ayatullah Borujerdi. He gained proficiency in the intellectual sciences such as the works of Sabzawari and Mulla Sadra under the guidance of Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i. After mastering the traditional and the intellectual sciences, he began to offer classes at the seminary to those students who were training to become jurists.

He authored a number of works on different topics such as gender equity, Islamic government and *khums*. However, one that has received disproportionate attention is titled *Shahid-e Javâd (Eternal Martyr)* that was published in 1968. In this work, he offers a novel and a radically different interpretation of the Karbala episode and Imam Husayn's (a) mission. He argues that the event of Karbala was not divinely preordained and that the Imam (a) did not have foreknowledge of the events that were to unfold, climaxing in his martyrdom along with his small band of followers. This raised serious protests from many members of the clergy, but he also received support and endorsement from some prominent jurists. One, of course, has the prerogative to agree or disagree with the Ayatullah's thesis, so long as it is done so within the parameters of Islamic ethics and etiquette. Seeking a monolithic worldview in which there is no dissent or



discord is an unattainable goal and hazardous when dealing with fallible human beings whose research findings are also fallible and subject to change and revision with the passage of time and advancement in knowledge and understanding. Diversity of opinions and plurality of views are blessings that ought to be embraced instead of being shunned or condemned. Accordingly, the insight, erudition, independence and intellectual courage of the Ayatullah should be celebrated as exemplary and worthy of emulation.

Translation of any work brings forth challenges between remaining faithful to the literal text of the work and striving to be idiomatic but still capture almost the totality of the meaning intended by the author. I have opted for the latter because Persian is a flowery and poetic language that lends itself to repetition but replicating this in English would seem odd and redundant.

I am most grateful to my wife, Mahbubeh Ettehad, for her invaluable and instrumental help and assistance in translating this work. Persian is her native language and she is well-read in Persian literature. Without her support, this translation work would not have been completed this year because of my teaching, research and administrative commitments at the University. Her brother, Shahram Ettehad, is the one who designed with care, diligence and insight five different beautiful designs from which to choose the cover and the back page of this book. They were all of such high caliber and depth in meaning that it made our task quite difficult to come to a decision on the final one. His patience and ever-readiness to make changes and amendments are very much appreciated.

I also wish to extend my profound gratitude to Dr. Tasneem Khimji of Akron, Ohio, who sponsored this translation project with her philanthropy which is always done with humility and without any desire to make an ostentatious display of her generosity. May God shower upon her infinite rewards for her kindness and promptness in responding to my request for assistance. She is a remarkable soul who has remained steadfast and resolute after the loss of her husband and eldest daughter, *marhuman* Dr. Naushad Khimji and Fatema, in a tragic car accident in June 2007. I was the Religious Director of the Islamic Center in Akron, Ohio, for about two years during which time I had the pleasure of working closely with Dr. Naushad Khimji. His vision, positive energy and outlook along with devotion and dedication to the cause of Islam and humanity were truly exemplary and remarkable. Fatema Khimji had just graduated with her bachelor's degree from Georgetown University when God, in His Wisdom, decreed that it was time for this innocent and joyful soul to return back to Him. May Allah (swt) envelope these two with His infinite Mercy, Compassion and Love, and give patience and endurance to their surviving family members to endure their departure from this earthly abode—Amen.

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August 7, 2009 / Sha‘ban 15, 1430



## Preface by the Author

In the middle of ninth century of the common era, corresponding to the third century *hijri*, members from extremist religious groups such as Mughirah b. Sa'id, Abu al-Khattab and people of similar mind, including Mufaddal b. Salih Abu Jamilah and Abdallah b. Qasim Hadrami and others, established the school of extremism. In order to promote their form of extremism, they fabricated traditions to fit their own ideas and attributed them to the Imams (a) so that people would believe in them without questioning their veracity. Although the Imams (a) strongly opposed this school of thought it was still able, to a large extent, to promote and give currency to its extremist ideas.

The extremists appointed persons to infiltrate the circle of the Imams (a). Once they had established trust as companions of the Imams (a) they were able to borrow books used by companions of the Imams (a) under the pretense that they would like to copy the hadiths of the Imams (a). While making copies for their own use, these extremists would add fabricated hadiths to this collection, then return the original manuscripts to their owners. Thereafter, they distributed widely amongst the people this manuscript which had fabricated hadiths interpolated amongst those that were authentic. Of course, nobody knew that these fabricated hadiths were not to be found in the original manuscript.

It was in this manner that books containing false hadiths were distributed to other places of Islamdom. Subsequently, for instance, when the late Kulayni

selected hadiths from the works of Imams' (a) companions and incorporated them in his work, *al-Kafi*, he relied upon manuscripts in circulation in the bazaar and chose the relevant traditions from them to insert in his hadith compilation. One such hadith says: "The Qur'an that was revealed upon Prophet Muhammad (S) by the agency of Gabriel comprised seventeen thousand verses."<sup>5</sup> This hadith that is found in *al-Kafi* is taken by Kulayni from the manuscript of the blind Ali b. Hakam. In all likelihood, it was concocted by a member of the extremist school who advanced this hadith in an attempt to insert interpolation and distortion in the Qur'an. Kulayni adopted this hadith, believing it to be from the original manuscript of the Imams' companions and, in all likelihood, came to believe on the veracity of this hadith.

Mufaddal b. Salih Abu Jamilah who is known to be an extremist and a liar<sup>6</sup> believed that Imam Husayn (a) undertook the journey to Karbala, knowing full well that he would be killed and as a result intentionally brought about his own death. He created a false hadith to this effect and incorporated it in his own work: "God had

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<sup>5</sup> Muhammad b. Ya'qub b. Ishaq al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, edited by Ali Akbar Ghaffari, 8 volumes (Tehran: Dar al-kutub al-Islamiyyah, 1968), 2:634, hadith no. 28 {*Fadl al-Qur'an—Bab al-nawadir*}. The actual numbers of verses in the Qur'an add up to about 6,236. See footnote no. 2 in the concise but useful booklet authored by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, *The Qur'an: Its Protection from Alteration* (Toronto: Ahlul Bayt Assembly of North America, 1994), p. 26. He writes: "Those who do not take the trouble of counting go on writing that there are 6,666 verses in the Qur'an. It is one more example of Muslim's tragic carelessness towards the Qur'an."

<sup>6</sup> Al-Hasan b. Yusuf b. Ali al-Mutahhar al-Hilli (Allamah Hilli), *Khulasat al-aqwal* (Najaf: al-Matba'at al-haydariyyah, 1961), p. 258.

written on the tablet that Imam Husayn (a) must travel with a group of his companions in order to be killed.” This tablet was brought to the Prophet (S) by Gabriel to pass it on to the Imams (a). For each of the Imams (a) there were special sealed instructions specific to him and he was required to follow whatever was contained in them. When Imam Husayn (a) assumed imamate, he opened the sealed instructions and saw that it was written: ‘You must prepare for martyrdom with a group of your companions,’ and the Imam (a) meticulously followed this divine instruction and subsequently marched to attain martyrdom. Mufaddal b. Salih Abu Jamilah attributed this statement to God so that if someone raised objection to committing suicide he could reply by saying that it is a divine directive which is of the highest stature such that nobody has a right to question or challenge it.

Kulayni entered this hadith in *al-Kafi* from Mufaddal b. Salih Abu Jamilah.<sup>7</sup> It is quite likely that Kulayni himself had attained confidence in the validity of this hadith and therefore included it in *al-Kafi*. The others, relying upon Kulayni as evidence of the authenticity of the hadith, included this hadith in their own works. For instance, Ayatullah Hajj Mirza Abu al-Fadl Zahidi Qummi, in his book titled *Maqсад al-Husayn*, p. 27 and p. 28 writes: “The above hadith (*wakhruj bi-qawmin*) proves that Imam Husayn (a) knew that he was undertaking the journey for the purpose of attaining death.” It is quite odd to observe a person of Ayatullah Qummi’s caliber not paying any attention to the fact that the narrator of the hadith, Abu Jamilah, is a liar and further he does not take into account

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<sup>7</sup> Muhammad b. Ya‘qub b. Ishaq al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, edited by Ali Akbar Ghaffari, 1:280.

that the content of this hadith is not in harmony with the *Shari'ah* because it is not permissible for one to intentionally kill himself/herself. Sayyid Murtada Alam al-Huda records a statement from Shaykh Tusi in his work, *Talkhis al-Shafi*: "It is prohibited for one to kill himself/herself," however, naïve persons such as Ayatullah Zahidi Qummi hastily believed in the truthfulness of this hadith and repeated it.

During our own time, there are many preachers on the pulpit who interpret for the people, based on this forged hadith, that in the rising of Imam Husayn (a) he was commanded to kill himself. They have repeated this matter and have continued to do so to such an extent that for the preachers and some people this has become part of their culture. Here, questions arise. Given that the action of Imam Husayn (a) is a proof and a model for the people, do the people have to follow him in intentionally killing themselves? And, does it then follow that the people should not strive to establish a just government and remove the oppression? Should they allow the oppressors to remain in power and the people to be annihilated? If this was so, Imam Khumayni would not have taken the initiative to uproot the oppressive government and establish an Islamic state. However, Imam Khumayni, who was an informed jurist and had correctly analyzed the uprising of Imam Husayn (a), followed his model and rose up (against the Shah of Iran) and was able to implement the same thing that Imam Husayn (a) wanted to achieve by bringing this objective to fruition. Is not this action of Imam Khumayni adequate to guide us and awaken us to the real reason for the uprising of Imam Husayn (a)? Without doubt, this is sufficient. Accordingly, we should not pay any attention to

someone who says that Imam Husayn (a) killed himself intentionally rather; we should reject him.

### Hadith by Abdallah b. Qasim Hadrami

Abdallah b. Qasim Hadrami, regarding whom Najashi<sup>8</sup> says that he is a frequent liar, relates a hadith on the authority of Imam Sadiq (a): "An Imam who does not know about the future events related to himself and others cannot be a Proof of God over His creation."<sup>9</sup> This hadith contradicts verse 9 of chapter 46 (Ahqaf—The Sand Dunes) in the Qur'an: "Say, I am not the first of God's messengers. I do not know what will be done with me or you; I only follow what is revealed to me; I only warn plainly."<sup>10</sup> This verse explicitly says that the Prophet is not aware of his own future and that of his people; however, the hadith from this dishonest narrator conflicts with the Qur'an. Since the status of the Imams (a) is lower than the Prophet (S) it follows that the former also are uninformed on future events.

It is regrettable that a group from the scholars and writers in order to establish the knowledge of the Imams (a) employ this hadith from a dishonest narrator, Abdallah b. Qasim Hadrami, to prove their case. For example, Ustadh Misbah

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<sup>8</sup> Ahmad b. Ali al-Najashi, *Rijal al-Najashi*, ed. Sayyid Musa al-Shubayri al-Zanjani (Qum: Mu'assasat al-nashr al-Islami, 1965), p. 226, no. 594. Abdallah b. Qasim Hadrami is evaluated by Najashi to be a persistent liar (*kadhhab*) and an extremist (*ghali*) who related traditions from those who had a tendency to exaggerate the virtues of the Imams (a).

<sup>9</sup> *al-Kafi*, 1:258.

<sup>10</sup> *The Qur'an: A New Translation*, tr. M. A. S. Abdel Haleem (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). All translations of Qur'anic verses are taken from this work with minor modifications, if warranted.



Yazdi<sup>11</sup> in his work *Rahnama Shenasi*, on page 482, quotes this hadith to prove the expansive knowledge of the Imams (a). Ustadh Misbah, by virtue of being dissolved in the love of the Imams (a), brings forth this hadith to prove the comprehensive knowledge of the Imams (a) and in this state does not consider whether the chain of transmission (*isnad*) of this hadith is sound or not and whether this hadith is in agreement with the Qur'an or not, although, we have an obligation to discard any hadith that contradicts the Qur'an. The hadith that Ustadh Misbah invokes as his proof is itself against the Qur'an and, further, the narrator is a liar. Is it possible to guide people with such kinds of hadiths and to believe in their content? This hadith would misguide the reader of the book by Misbah and for the young students this would constitute something worse than deadly poison, because poison affects only the body of the human but this hadith paralyzes the intellect and the thought process. It is necessary that those who claim to be the guides of the people pay closer attention and do more reflection so that they do not become the cause of misguiding others.

Aside from Ustadh Misbah, there is a group of writers who quote this forged hadith to prove the Imam's knowledge of the unseen:

1. Muhammad Husayn Muzaffar in *Ilm-e Imam*, p. 53.

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<sup>11</sup> Ayatullah Misbah Yazdi is the director of Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute in Qum, Iran and a member of the Assembly of Experts (*Majlise Khobregan*) that is entrusted with the primary task of choosing the jurist (*faqih*) who would occupy the supreme position under the Constitution of Iran.

2. Sayyid Ahmad Fahri Zanjani in *Salar-e shahidan*, p. 236.
3. Murtazavi Langarudi in *Yek Tahqiq-e 'amiqtar*, p. 54.
4. Ash'ari and Al Taha in *Yek Barresi-ye mukhtasar*, p. 16.
5. Ali Kadhimi in *Rah-e serwowom*, p. 33.
6. Attayi Khorasani in *Zamimeh-ye afsaneh-ye kitab*, p. 511.
7. Muhammad Ali Ansari Qummi in *Defa' az Husayn-e Shahid*, p. 43.
8. Ali Akbar Ghaffari in the preface of the book titled *Berrasi-ye ta'rikh-e Ashura*, p. 30.

From the above, it is evident how a group of scholars like Ustadh Misbah were duped into accepting this forged hadith from the lying narrator, Abdallah b. Qasim Hadrami, and advanced this hadith to prove the Imam's (a) knowledge of the unseen (*ilm al-ghayb*). If scholars can be deceived by the forged hadith, then it demonstrates that the exaggerators were successful in attracting a group of scholars towards them, resulting in the strengthening of their distorted worldview. This is evidence that these extremists, to a large extent, have been successful and have attained their objective.

And from here we realize that the worldview of extremism has spread everywhere such that both the professors and students have been duped. Here, responsible people consider it their obligation to stand up against this deviant thought and speak the truth. In these circumstances, it is mandatory for the scholars to get involved and combat this destructive poison of extremism. This book titled "Extremism (*Ghuluww*)" has

been written with the aforementioned objective and is presented to people of reflection and thought. May this insignificant service in the path of God who has endowed us with intellect be accepted, God-willing.

Salehi Najafabadi

Tehran

October 2004 / Mehr 1383

## Chapter 1

### Extremism: A Form of Intellectual Deviance

What is Extremism? The path of extremism is a form of intellectual deviance that has always been present throughout human history. And, the meaning of extremism is to elevate something or someone to a level higher than its true reality. The following are examples:

1. Prophet Jesus (a) is God or the son of God.
2. Lady Mary (a) is the object of human worship.
3. Imam Ali (a) is the creator of human beings or the manager or supervisor of the whole of creation.
4. The death of the Prophet (S)'s infant son, Abraham, resulted in a solar eclipse.
5. Each and every legal ruling (*fatwa*) of a *mujtahid* or jurist that is issued has been endorsed by the hidden Imam (a) and thus there is no possibility of error.
6. A particular tree is the fulfiller of people's desires such that if someone ties a piece of cloth on its branch his/her wishes will be fulfilled.
7. We should prostrate at the sun because it is the source of light and life.
8. River Ganj in India is sacred and anyone who swims in it on a particular day will be blessed such that his sins are forgiven and his wishes are fulfilled.
9. A particular type of cow is sacred and deserving of being worshipped and its urine is a source of blessing.

In situations where these forms of extremism become well-established in ancient traditions, their supporters became zealously devoted to them. This zeal, at times, reaches a level that believers are prepared to defend these practices and belief system and perhaps go so far as to sacrifice themselves for an idol or a cow!

### Islam Combats Extremism

One of the primary objectives of Islam, which is the religion of all the prophets, was and has been to combat religious extremism and to struggle to guide people who are extremists. For instance, the noble Qur'an is very critical with regards to extremism of Christians. It emphatically objects to the excessive exaggerations of the Christians concerning Jesus (a) and his mother contained in verses such as chapter 3, verse 59; chapter 4, verses 171 and 172; chapter 5, verses 72, 73, 75, 77, 116, and 117; chapter 9, verses 30 and 31. It goes as far as to condemn them with the phrase "*qatala-hum Allah*" (Chapter 9, verse 30), which means that may God kill them or send a curse upon them.

In the above eleven Qur'anic verses, God rebukes Christians for exaggerating the status of Jesus (a) and his mother, and desires from them to abandon this deviant belief.<sup>12</sup>

"People of the Book, do not go to excess in your religion, and do not say anything about God except the truth: The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was nothing more than a

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<sup>12</sup> There are other Qur'anic verses such as: chapter 4, verse 171; chapter 5, verse 72; chapter 5, verse 116.

messenger of God, His word, conveyed to Mary, a spirit from Him. So believe in God and His messengers and do not speak of a 'Trinity'—stop [this], that is better for you—God is only one God, He is far above having a son, everything in the heavens and earth belongs to Him and He is sufficient protector" (Qur'an, 4:171).

"Those who say, 'God is the Messiah, son of Mary,' although the Messiah himself said, 'Children of Israel, worship God, my Lord and your Lord,' have defied [what he said]: if anyone associates others with God, God will forbid him from the Garden, and Hell will be his home. No one will help such evildoers" (Qur'an, 5:72).

"When God says, 'Jesus, son of Mary, did you say to people, "Take me and my mother as two gods alongside God"?' he will say, 'May You be exalted! I would never say what I had no right to say—if I had said such a thing You would have known it: You know all that is within me, though I do not know what is within You, You alone have full knowledge of things unseen' (Qur'an, 5:116).

In all probability, the elaboration of the incident in the last Qur'anic verse above is an actual situation or it is language that expresses a current situation. Not that in reality this conversation took place between God and Jesus (a) at a particular time where God asked Jesus (a) "Did you tell the people to worship you and your mother?" and Jesus (a) replied 'no.' Sayyid Murtada Alam al-Huda commenting on chapter 7, verse 172 of the Qur'an says<sup>13</sup>: "It elucidates the current state that is

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<sup>13</sup> "[Prophet], when your Lord took out the offspring from the loins of the Children of Adam and made them bear witness about

present at all times and is about existence and creation. Likewise, the covenant mentioned in the Qur'an in the period of pre-existence between God and the children of Adam did not actually take place: 'Am I not your Lord?' and they replied 'Yes, you are our Lord.'<sup>14</sup> Now, let's get back to the main subject.

These Qur'anic verses that were revealed about the extremist tendencies of Christians demonstrate that this belief of viewing Jesus (a) and his mother as worthy of worship was present in them.

### What is the Reason for this Extremism?

In the commentary of chapter 5, verse 72, Muhammad b. Ka'b relates that after the lifting up of Jesus to the heavens, three scholars out of a hundred were chosen from Banu Israel to give an opinion regarding Jesus (a). One of them said: "Does anyone have knowledge of the unseen except God?" They replied: "no." He continued: "Since Jesus (a) had knowledge of the unseen therefore he is God. He stayed on the earth as long as he desired and then went up to the heavens." Second one said: "We know Jesus (a) and his mother. Since it is not possible for God to have a mother therefore Jesus (a) is not God. Rather, he is the son of God." The third scholar said: "Jesus (a) himself used to say: 'I am a servant of God and it is His soul and Word that was inspired into Mary.'

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themselves, He said, 'Am I not your Lord?' and they replied, 'Yes, we bear witness.' So you cannot say on the Day of Resurrection, 'We were not aware of this...' (Qur'an, 7:172).

<sup>14</sup> Ali b. al-Husayn al-Sharif al-Murtada, *Amali*, ed. Muhammad Badr al-Din al-Halabi, 4 vols. (Qum: Maktabah Ayatullah al-Uzma al-Mar'ashi al-Najafi, 1983), 1:20-1.

Therefore, I say the same thing that Jesus (a) said about himself." These three scholars came in front of the public and each one put forth his own opinion about Jesus (a). From this point onwards, Christians were divided into three groups. One of them said that Jesus (a) is God, another one said that Jesus (a) is the son of God and the last one said Jesus (a) is the servant of God and it was the Soul and Word that was infused into Mary.<sup>15</sup>

If the above anecdote is reliable then we know that only two groups from amongst the followers of Jesus (a) were guilty of exaggeration (*ghuluww*) and not all of them. The reason for this exaggeration was the ignorant proof advanced by the two scholars of Banu Israel. These two scholars and the people accepted this view because of their excessive love of Jesus (a) and a conducive mindset to accept the same. Therefore, it can be said that the reason for extremism of these two groups with regards to Jesus (a) was love and ignorance, and the Qur'an desires for them to come out of this state of servitude to ignorance and excessive love and return back to the judgment of reason just as the third scholar who relied upon the verdict from reason did not accept extremism and said: "Jesus (a) is neither God nor the son of God. Rather, he is a servant of God and it was the Soul and Word that was put into Mary."

### Extremism Regarding Abu Hanifah

Just as excessive love and ignorance caused the followers of Jesus (a) to make exaggerated statements about him,

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<sup>15</sup> Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, *al-Durr al-manthur*, 6 vols. (Jedda: Dar al-ma'rifah, 1945), 2:299.



likewise it is the same excessive love and ignorance that incites many followers of other leaders to make exaggerated statements about them and to create false virtues in them. Amongst the followers of Abu Hanifah, some fabricated incredibly exaggerated anecdotes and unimaginable virtues about him to such an extent that they raised his status above that of the prophets. For instance, "Amongst the nobility of Abu Hanifah, one is that Hazrat Khidr (a) would visit Abu Hanifah every morning for a period of five years and study from him the rulings about Islam. When Abu Hanifah passed away, Hadrat Khidr (a) implored God: 'God, if in your estimation I have a good status, then please allow Abu Hanifah to teach me from his grave every morning so that I can learn the totality of the Law of Prophet Muhammad (S) from him.' God accepted the plea of Hadrat Khidr (a) and brought to life Abu Hanifah in the grave. Khidr (a) for the next twenty-five years would visit the grave of Abu Hanifah and completed his study of the Islamic Law. When Khidr (a) finished his studies, God instructed him to transmit all that he learnt from Abu Hanifah to Qushayri...."<sup>16</sup>

### Analysis

If the person with knowledge that is mentioned in Chapter 18 (al-Kahf—the Cave) is Khidr (a) and from whom Prophet Moses (a) is instructed to gain knowledge from and if Prophet Moses (a) who is referred to as the Word of God, is from the distinguished prophets (*ulu al-'azm*), as mentioned in majority of Qur'anic exegesis,

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<sup>16</sup> Asad Hayder, *al-Imam al-Sadiq wa al-a'immat al-arba'ah*, 6 vols. in 3, 3<sup>rd</sup> print (Beirut: Dar al-kitab al-Arabi, 1983), 1:299.

then the following would ensue. The station of Abu Hanifah is higher by two degrees than the eminent prophet of God, Moses (a), because Hazrat Khidr (a) by virtue of transmitting sciences to prophet Moses (a) was one station higher than he, and Abu Hanifah by virtue of transmitting the sciences to Hazrat Khidr (a) for a period of thirty years was one station higher than Khidr (a). So, in a nutshell, Abu Hanifah from the standpoint of knowledge was two stations higher than Prophet Moses (a)! Observe where one ends up when exaggerating on the virtues?!

Meanwhile, if it is true that God brought to life Abu Hanifah so that Khidr (a) can learn from him why did He imprison him in the grave for a period of twenty five years such that Khidr (a) was directed to visit his grave and learn from him?! What enmity did God have against Abu Hanifah that he prevented him from returning to the world and instead confined him to the grave?!

### Abu Hanifah: The Reviver of Religion of God

Khatib Baghdadi through several intermediaries from Muhammad b. Yazid on the authority of Sulayman b. Qays on the authority of Abu al-Mu'alla on the authority of Aban b. Abi Ayyash on the authority of Anas on the authority of Prophet Muhammad (S) relates: "In the future, after my departure, a man will come whose name is Nu'man b. Thabit and his patronym (*kunya*) will be

Abu Hanifah. He will revive the religion of God and His traditions."<sup>17</sup>

Khatib Baghdadi writes that this hadith is false and fabricated because Muhammad b. Yazid is *matruk al-hadith* (abandoned in hadith). Sulayman b. Qays and Abu al-Mu'alla are both unknown and Aban b. Abi Ayyash have been accused of lying. It is incredible that these narrators do not relate a hadith of the Prophet (S) about Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a), who was a contemporary of Abu Hanifah, that in the future the religion of God and the traditions will be revived by a member of his family whose name is Ja'far b. Muhammad and *kunya* is Abu Abdallah. The forged hadith continues: "When Ja'far b. Muhammad (a) saw Abu Hanifa, he told him: 'I see that in the future you will revive the traditions of my grandfather after they have been annihilated and you will be the refuge for all who are in difficulty and hardship. You will be a source of guidance for them and for those who are confounded. God will help you and bestow upon you felicity so that you will be able to guide the devotees of God.'"<sup>18</sup> One of the transmitters of the hadith by the name of Abu al-Bukhturi, also known as Wahb b. Wahb, is judged to be the worse liar in the world and some of the hadiths in *al-Kafi* have been transmitted on his authority. This report makes it seem that Imam Sadiq (a) himself did not play any role in reviving the traditions of his grandfather, Prophet

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<sup>17</sup> Abu Bakr Ahmad b. Ali Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Ta'rikh Baghdad*, ed. Mustafa Abd al-Qadir al-Ata, 14 vols. (Beirut: Dar al-kutub al-ilmiyyah, 1996), 2:287.

<sup>18</sup> Abd al-Husayn al-Amini al-Najafi, *al-Ghadir fi al-Kitab wa al-sunnah wa al-adab*, 11 vols. (Beirut: Dar al-kitab al-Arabi, 1977), 5:278.

Muhammad (S), and all the hope was placed in the person of Abu Hanifah who in the future would bring to life the Islam and the traditions of the Prophet (S) and that he would be the source of solace and comfort for those in sorrow and grief!

### Abu Hanifah in the Care of Imam Sadiq (a)

It is likely that in order to attract attention of the Shi'is some of the supporters of Abu Hanifah concocted another fictitious story which says that, at the time when the father of Abu Hanifah passed away, he was a small child. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a) married the mother of Abu Hanifah and the small child grew up under the guidance of Imam Sadiq (a) and obtained knowledge of the sciences from the Imam (a). Now, how is it possible for Abu Hanifah to be a young child and to grow up in the home of Imam Sadiq (a) when Abu Hanifah was not younger but, in fact, three years older than Imam Saidq (a)! Abu Hanifah was born in 699 C.E. and Imam Sadiq (a) in 702 C.E.<sup>19</sup>

Incidentally, those who fabricated virtues regarding Abu Hanifah did not consult each other to harmonize their stories because some of them present Abu Hanifah as the teacher of Khidr (a) such that the former's status is above that of the prophets and subsequently it should not be necessary for him to obtain knowledge of the sciences from Imam Sadiq (a). Whereas, others have portrayed Abu Hanifah as one who obtained his knowledge from Imam Sadiq (a)!

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<sup>19</sup> *al-Imam al-Sadiq*, 1:293.

Few More Virtues

Now, I would like to enumerate some of the virtues that have been fabricated in favor of Abu Hanifah:

1. Prophet Jesus (a), upon his return, will follow Abu Hanifah and he will act upon and issue judgments in accordance with the school of thought of Abu Hanifah!
2. Abu Hanifah used to recite two units of prayers every night and in each unit he would recite the whole of the Qur'an!
3. Abu Hanifah did not sleep for forty years at night and would offer the morning prayer with the same ablution that he had performed for the night prayers!
4. On one occasion a lamb was lost and Abu Hanifah asked: "How long does a sheep normally live?" They replied, "ten years." As a result, Abu Hanifah did not eat meat for ten years to ensure that he would not inadvertently offend the owner by accidentally eating the meat of the lost sheep!
5. In one sitting, Abu Hanifah read the entire Qur'an seventy thousand times and would not get up till he had finished it all!<sup>20</sup> It must be noted that if Abu Hanifah was able to read the whole Qur'an in one hour, it would take eight years without sleeping, eating and talking,

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 1:299.

studying, issuing legal opinions and attending to other business matters. Although, this is the case if we assume that the entire Qur'an can be read in one hour; however, it is known that if the Qur'an is read with great speed, it would still require about ten hours to complete. In this case, it would require Abu Hanifah about eighty years of continuous reading of the Qur'an during day and night without sleeping, eating and other works. Whereas, the whole life of Abu Hanifah was seventy years! Observe how the ardent desire to exaggerate virtues can blind the eyes of insight of zealous supporters.

6. God has given the attributes of Abu Hanifah in the Hebrew Bible and has provided the good tidings that in the future such a person of great distinction would be born.
7. God informed Abu Hanifah: "I will forgive you and all those who follow your school of thought till the Day of Judgment."
8. The Messenger of God (S) was envious of the Prophet David (a) because the wise Solomon lived during David's lifetime and belonged to his community, whereas there was no such equivalent person in the community of Islam. Because of this, Gabriel descended and gave the glad tidings to the Prophet (S) that Abu Hanifah, whose wisdom is of higher caliber than that of Solomon, was bestowed upon the community of

Islam.<sup>21</sup> Observe that Solomon was living at the time of David (a) and he helped the latter with his wisdom. The source of enviousness and sorrow on the part of the Prophet (S) in this story is the absence of a person of the status of Solomon in his lifetime and not the knowledge and wisdom that was possessed by Solomon because God had already bestowed upon the Prophet a higher degree of knowledge and wisdom than Solomon. Therefore, if God wanted to dispel the sorrow and grief of the Prophet (S), He ought to have created Abu Hanifah during the lifetime of the Prophet (S) so that he would gain delight from seeing him and not by being born more than sixty years after the death of the Prophet (S)! Did God not pay heed to the sorrow and wish of the Prophet (S) such that Abu Hanifah was born a few decades late?

It must be said that those who fabricate virtues under the influence of excessive love and ignorance are not able to think systematically to enable them to forge virtues with skill and knowledge such that no objections can be raised. However, this is the natural state of affairs that is the outcome of excessive adoration for one's leaders and guides that brings about paralysis of the intellect and the elevation of ignorance as the arbiter because over zealous disciples are at a loss in figuring out what praises to lavish on their revered leaders.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 1:293.

### Extremism in Reproaching and Slandering of Abu Hanifah

It is not only the lovers of Abu Hanifah who are guilty of extremism; his detractors are equally guilty of exaggeration for slandering him and, as a result, having distanced themselves from the orbit of justice. His opponents have reported:

1. Abu Hanifah was a *zindiq* (heretic, apostate) who digressed from the path of religion and his beliefs were corrupt.
2. Abu Hanifah was against the Qur'an and the *sunnah* and, as a result, possessed no conviction (*iman*).
3. Abu Hanifah became an unbeliever twice and others came to him to convince him to seek repentance.
4. There has not been a person born that has brought greater harm to Islam than Abu Hanifah.
5. It would have brought less harm and injury to Islam if Abu Hanifah had fought against Islam with a sword than the loss sustained by Islam as a result of his ideas, school of thought and legal rulings.<sup>22</sup>

These kinds of exaggerations and excesses on the part of Abu Hanifah's friends and foes in praising or denigrating him respectively make the task of an

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 1:299-300 and *al-Ghadir*, 5:282.



objective scholar difficult because the researcher must exert great effort to decipher Abu Hanifah's true virtues that are mixed up with his exaggerated praises. Likewise, it is difficult to identify the reasons for all these reproaches against Abu Hanifah that have also been exaggerated. As a result, the scholar who is balanced and fair has to undertake a rigorous process of research to determine the reasons for these exaggerated praises and reproaches in an effort to uncover the true character and personality of Abu Hanifah.

### Extremism Regarding Malik

Followers of Malik b. Anas, not to be left behind others, were prompted to fabricate praiseworthy reports about him:

1. Malik b. Anas stayed in the womb of his mother for a period of three years.<sup>23</sup> It is not clear what is so praiseworthy in remaining in the womb for three years!
2. Malik b. Anas would see the Prophet in his dream every night!
3. Malik b. Anas is one of the proofs of God for the people.<sup>24</sup>
4. There is no other book after the Qur'an that excels in its content more than the book *al-Muwatta'* of Malik b. Anas.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, *Tanwir al-hawalik*, Introduction, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

There is a high probability that the Abbasid dynasty had a share in spreading or fabricating these exaggerated virtues of Imam Malik because Harun and his two sons, Amin and Ma'mun, arrived in Medina from Baghdad to listen to the work of Malik b. Anas, the author of *Muwatta'*, from himself and then transmit this to others.<sup>25</sup> It is certain that this act was not undertaken with the sole motive of learning and for the pleasure of God; rather it is obvious that the intention was to elevate the status of Malik as a saint. By this, they were hoping to attract people to seek the guidance and rulings of Malik b. Anas and not Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a). Notice that during the same time that Harun and his two sons come to Medina from Baghdad to listen to Malik's work from himself, Harun on account of cruelty and hard heartedness towards Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a), successor of the Prophet (S), forced him into exile from Medina. He kept him imprisoned for years and finally killed him through poison. It is obvious that just as the arrest, exile and imprisonment of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a) was not motivated by religious considerations, glorifying Malik b. Anas likewise was a politically motivated act without any religious considerations. Therefore, we cannot reject the probability that the caliphs were actively involved in propagating and fabricating exaggerated virtues in favor of Malik b. Anas and thus the latter is

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> Suyuti, *Ta'rikh al-khulafa'*, p. 294.

indebted to the Abbasids for elevating his religious status.

### Extremism Regarding Shafi'i

Just like the other sects, the supporters of Shafi'i and the leaders of this sect did not restrain themselves from concocting exaggerated virtues in favor of their leader:

1. Isma'il Muzni, student of Shafi'i, sees the Prophet (S) in his dream. He asks the Prophet (S) about Shafi'i. The former replies: "Whoever seeks my love and adulation and my *sunnah* must follow the thoughts of Muhammad b. Idris Shafi'i because Shafi'i is from me and I am from him."
2. Ahmad b. Nasr sees the Prophet in his dream and inquires: "O Messenger of God, give me a directive on who to follow and which school of thought (*madhhab*) to adopt?" Prophet replies: "From Muhammad b. Idris Shafi'i as he is from me. God will be satisfied and joyful with Shafi'i and all those who follow his school of thought till the day of Judgment."
3. Ahmad b. Hasan Tiridhi said: "In my dream I saw the Prophet (S) and during the conversation I asked: 'What is your opinion regarding Shafi'i?' He replied: 'Shafi'i revived my *sunnah*.'"
4. Ahmad b. Hasan Tiridhi saw the Prophet in his dream and complained to him about the differences of opinion amongst Abu Hanifah, Malik and Shafi'i. The Prophet (S) responded:

“Shafi‘i is from me and he guides people towards my path.”<sup>27</sup>

Notice to what extent the zealous lovers of Shafi‘i exaggerated his virtues! These virtues were deliberately related in a form of a dream in which the Prophet (S) spoke so that anyone who objected to the veracity of these virtues would be stigmatized and censured for opposing the directives of the Prophet (S).

### Extremism in Reproaching Shafi‘i

The detractors of Shafi‘i are also guilty of extremism and of transgressing the boundaries of justice by creating reports to denigrate him:

“Abu Hurayrah reports on the authority of the Messenger of God (S) that he said: ‘In the future, a calamity will befall my community (*ummah*) by one whose name is Muhammad b. Idris. He will be a source of sedition whose magnitude will be more than that of Satan (*Iblis*)’”<sup>28</sup>

Exaggeration on the weaknesses of Shafi‘i are prompted by hate on the part of his enemies accompanied with ignorance. Likewise, exaggerating his virtues is the result of excessive love for him coupled with ignorance.

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<sup>27</sup> *al-Ghadir*, 5:283.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

### Extremism Regarding Ahmad b. Hanbal

Followers of Ahmad b. Hanbal, like the followers of other personalities, fabricated reports in order to magnify the status of their leader:

1. Abu Bakr b. Makarim, a virtuous and praiseworthy person, is reported to have said: "On one of the days before the start of the month of Ramadan, plenty of rain had come down. I dreamt on one of the nights of Ramadan that I was paying a visit to the grave of Ahmad b. Hanbal, as was customary for me. I observed that his grave had sunk by a few inches. I said to myself that this is most likely because of the excessive rain that had come about before the start of the month of Ramadan. Thereafter, I heard the voice of Ahmad b. Hanbal from the grave: 'That is not so. Rather, the cavity in the grave is due to the awe-inspiring presence of God, Majestic and Glorified, who had come to pay me a visit. I asked God: 'Why do you pay me a visit every year?' God replied: 'O Ahmad, it is because you helped me in the preservation of My Word such that it was revived again and can be heard at the mosques.' As a result, I began kissing the grave of Ahmad b. Hanbal and I asked him: 'What is the mystery behind the fact that people kiss no grave other than yours?' He replied: 'My son, this is not because of my nobility rather it is because of the nobility of the Prophet (S) as I am in possession of a few strands of his hair.' Ahmad b. Hanbal reiterated twice that: 'Whoever loves me will visit me in the month of Ramadan.'"

2. Abu Bakr b. Anzawiyyah saw the Prophet (S) in a dream in which Ahmad b. Hanbal was next to the Prophet (S): "I asked the Prophet: 'O Messenger of God, who is this?' He replied: 'He is Ahmad who in reality is the beloved of God and of His messenger. He donated 1,000 dinars to spread the hadiths. Whoever visits the grave of Ahmad b. Hanbal, God will forgive his/her sins. Whoever harbors enmity against him is actually inimical towards me and whoever harbors animosity against me is in reality inimical towards God.'"
3. One of the ancients has reported that an old devout woman lived in our times and exclusively prayed for fifty years. On one morning, she woke up terrified because she saw a jinn in a dream who said to her: "A group of jinn had eavesdropped and heard that the angels were giving condolences to each other upon the death of a virtuous man by the name of Ahmad b. Hanbal." After indicating the place of his grave, the jinn continued: "Whoever is buried next to him, God will forgive that person and, if you can, upon your death have yourself buried next to him and visit him one day before your death." The narrator of this report says: "This devout woman died exactly in accordance with the timing that the jinn had told her and from this we realized that the dream of this woman was true."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 5:202-3.

Extremism Regarding Abdallah b. Zubayr

Passionate followers of Abdallah b. Zubayr likewise fabricated virtues in his favor. Umar b. Qays reports: "Abdallah b. Zubayr had one hundred slaves who spoke different languages and the former spoke with each one of them in their own language." That is to say, Abdallah b. Zubayr knew one hundred languages.<sup>30</sup> Those who concocted this virtue in praise of Abdallah b. Zubayr did not reflect on whether it is possible to have one hundred obedient slaves? How is it possible that these one hundred slaves were captured from one hundred different regions that spoke different languages? And they did not take into account that how it could be possible for Abdallah b. Zubayr to learn one hundred languages and from whom? Especially, at a time when literate people were few in number and even fewer those who were qualified to teach others how to read and write Arabic. How then was it possible for Abdallah b. Zubayr to learn one hundred languages? The purpose of the supporters of Abdallah b. Zubayr was merely to circulate exaggerated reports about his virtues. Who made up these forgeries?

It is possible that these reports were made up by Umar b. Qays who lived up to about 680 C.E. and was the judge in Mecca. He is graded as a liar in the books of biographers of transmitters. Ahmad b. Hanbal has said: "Hadith by this person is void and Yahya b. Mu'ayyin

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<sup>30</sup> Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, *Ta'rikh al-khulafa'*, p. 213.

has said that Umar b. Qays cannot be relied upon." And Bukhari says; "He is rejected by the hadith scholars."<sup>31</sup>

Note: The lovers of Abdallah b. Zubayr, on the basis of these virtues have elevated his status to a level higher than that of the Prophet (S) because those who wanted to ascribe to the Prophet knowledge of various languages did not exceed seventy-two or seventy-three. This unreliable hadith has been related as follows:

The reporter of the hadith says: "I asked Imam Muhammad Taqi (a) 'O son of the Messenger of God, how come the Prophet (S) is referred to as *ummi*?' He replied: 'What do people say?' I said: 'They say because the Prophet did not know how to write, they called him *ummi*.' The Imam said: 'They are lying and may the curse of God descend upon them. How is it possible to be so when God himself in His Book says: "It is He who raised a messenger, among the people who had no Scripture, to recite His revelations to them, to make them grow spiritually and teach them the Scripture and wisdom" (Qur'an, 62:2). How is it possible for him to teach the people something that he is not knowledgeable of? I swear by God that the Prophet knew how to read and write seventy-two or seventy-three languages. The reason why he is referred to as *ummi* is because he was the resident of Mecca and the name of Mecca is *umm al-qura* because God has said: "This is a blessed Scripture that We have sent down to confirm what came before it and for

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<sup>31</sup> Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Dhahabi, *Mizan al-i'tidal fi naqd al-rijal*, Ali Muhammad al-Bajawi, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dar al-ma'rifah, 1985), 3:218 and 219.



you to warn the Mother of Cities and all around it”” (Qur'an, 6:92).<sup>32</sup>

The above hadith that appears to have been forged by the zealous supporters of the Prophet has a number of deficiencies.

1. The chain of transmission (*isnad*) is not sound.
2. There are those who superficially assumed that that the word *al-kitab* means to teach how to write and subsequently the meaning of *yu'allimuhum al-kitab* means that the Prophet (S) used to teach the people how to write. Based on this, they questioned that how is it possible for the Prophet (S) to teach something, i.e. how to write, when he himself does not know this? However, in actuality the meaning of *kitab* is not to write rather it means *ma anzal Allah*—that the Prophet would convey the meaning of the Book.
3. It is not correct to say that the Messenger of God is referred to as *ummi* because he is from *umm al-qura* because
  - i. the word *ummi* has been employed for those other than the residents of Mecca as found in the Qur'an: "If they argue with you [Prophet], say, 'I have devoted myself to God alone and so

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<sup>32</sup> Muhammad b. Hasan al-Saffar, *Basa'ir al-darajat*, ed. Mirza Muhsin Kucheh Baghi (Tehran: Mu'assasat al-a'lami, 1983), p. 245, hadith no. 1.

have my followers.' Ask those who were given the Scripture, as well as those without one (*ummiyyin*), 'Do you too devote yourselves to Him alone?' If they do, they will be guided, but if they turn away, your only duty is to convey the message. God is aware of His servants" (Qur'an 3:20). It is clear that the word *ummi* has been used to refer to those who were not recipients of a divine Scripture—be they residents of Mecca or not.

- ii. If someone is related to *umm al-qura* then he/she should be referred to as *qarawiy* and not *ummi* based upon the rule of grammar that is found in cases such as when reference is made to Abu Hanifah, it is said "Hanafi" or for Abu Talib, "Talibi."
4. The narrators of the above hadith intend to convey that God miraculously taught the Prophet seventy-two or seventy-three languages which raises a question: How is it that God taught him only these languages and not the rest? In the world, there are hundreds of languages; in India alone there are more than 100 languages. If the intent is to demonstrate that God miraculously taught the Prophet (S) many languages, then why limit the number to seventy-two or seventy-three? Perhaps the one forging the hadith thought that there are were only seventy-two or seventy-three languages in the whole world.

5. This report that the Prophet (S) knew how to read and write after the beginning of his prophetic ministry is weak and suspect and, as a result, the scholars reject it. Ustadh Shahid Mutahhari, in a work that is concise but profound titled *Payambar-e ummi*, brings forth convincing proofs and concludes that the Prophet did not know how to read and write in both the pre- and post-prophetic period:

It can be inferred from the evidence available that the Holy Prophet (S) neither read nor wrote in the period of his prophethood. However, Shi'i and Sunni scholars have different opinions on this matter. Some have considered improbability of this issue as they say: "How is it possible that the *wahy* (revelation), which used to teach everything, has not taught him to read and write?"<sup>33</sup>

It has been mentioned in several Shi'i narrations that the Prophet (S) could read in the period of prophethood but could not write.<sup>34</sup> One of these narrations is in Saduq's book *'Ilal al-shara'i*. It reads:

One of Allah's gifts to His Prophet was that he read but did not write. The time when Abu Sufyan headed for Uhud, al-

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<sup>33</sup> *Bihar al-anwar*, 16:134.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 16:132.

‘Abbas, the Prophet’s uncle, wrote a letter to him. He received the letter when he was in one of the gardens near Madinah. He read the letter but did not make his companions aware of its contents. He ordered them to go to the city and there he let them know about the contents.<sup>35</sup>

This story is different in Zayni Dahlan’s book titled *Sirah*. It relates:

As soon as the Prophet received al-‘Abbas’s letter, he opened its seal and handed it over to Ubay ibn Ka‘b to read. Ka‘b read it, and the Prophet ordered him not to spread out the news. Then, the Prophet went to Sa‘d ibn al-Rabi‘, the famous companion, informed him of the contents of the letter and asked him too, not to reveal it.<sup>36</sup>

Some others believed that the Prophet (S) could both read and write in the period of prophethood. Sayyid Murtada—as is mentioned in *Bihar al-anwar*—states: “A group of scholars hold the belief that the Holy Prophet (S) did not die until he was able to read and write.”<sup>37</sup> Sayyid Murtada himself relies on the well-known tradition: “ink and pen” and says: “That the Prophet asked [those close to him] for ink and pen to write instructions lest they might go astray after his death, has

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 16:132.

<sup>36</sup> Zayni Dahlan, *Sirah*, 2:24.

<sup>37</sup> *Bihar al-anwar*, 16:133.

been transmitted through reliable narrations and histories.”<sup>38</sup>

It is however inappropriate to rely on the tradition, for it does not openly indicate that the Holy Prophet (S) intended to write with his own hand. Even if we assume that he intended to have someone write, in the presence of the people, and thus have them as witnesses, using the statement: “I want to write something for you lest you should go astray” is quite acceptable. In literature, this is called “metaphorical attribution.” It is one of the signs of eloquence and is used widely in Arabic as well as other languages.<sup>39</sup>

I am in agreement with the views of Shahid Mutahhari.

It is quite likely those who felt that not knowing how to read and write after the commencement of the prophetic ministry constituted a sign of deficiency, created these kinds of hadiths out of love for him. However, to surmise that not knowing how to read or write represents a disability in the Prophet (S) is nothing other than the product of a superficial imagination.

Those who wanted to remove this apparent deficiency on the part of the Prophet began to search for evidence to show that the Prophet was literate even BEFORE the beginning of prophethood so that the issue of whether he was literate after the commencement of his mission would be mute. Dr. Sayyid Abd al-Latif Hindi, President

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 16:135.

<sup>39</sup> Murtada Mutahhari, *The Unschooled Prophet (Payambar-e ummi)* (Tehran: Islamic Propagation Organization, 1991), pp. 17-18.

of the Islamic Academy in Hyderabad, in his lecture at one of the conferences, who had convinced himself that the Prophet (S) was literate before his prophethood based on Qur'anic verse 164 in chapter 34<sup>40</sup> said, "As the Holy Qur'an clearly states, the foremost duty of the Prophet (S) was teaching the Qur'an to his followers, and it is certain that the minimum capability required for the one who wants to teach the contents of a book to others is, again as the Qur'an states explicitly, being able to make use of the pen or, at least, being able to read what has been written by the pen."<sup>41</sup> The speech of the aforementioned scholar was the reason why Shahid Mutahhari decided to write this brief but very useful booklet titled *Payambar-e ummi* to prove that the Prophet (S) was illiterate both before and after the beginning of prophethood so that people like him would not mistakenly believe that this is a deficiency, rather it is a sign of the Prophet's (S) perfection.

### Extremism Regarding the Caliphs

Khatib Baghdadi narrates a hadith on the authority of Abd al-Rahman b. Affan from Muhammad b. Mujib al-Sa'ig from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a) on the authority of his fathers from the Prophet (S): "The night on which I had ascended (*mi'raj*) to the heavens, I saw that it was written: 'There is no god but God and Muhammad is His Messenger' and after that was written 'Abu Bakr Siddiq

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<sup>40</sup> "God has been truly gracious to the believers in sending them a Messenger from among their own, to recite His revelations to them, to make them grow in purity, and to teach them the Scripture and wisdom—before that they were clearly astray" (Qur'an, 3:164).

<sup>41</sup> Murtada Mutahhari, pp. 57-8.

and Umar Faruq and Uthman Dhu Nurayn, who will be killed unjustly.”<sup>42</sup>

In the opinion of the experts on biographical works (*rijaʿ*), Abd al-Rahman b. Affan and Muhammad b. Mujib al-Saʿig are known to be liars.<sup>43</sup>

Here it is worthy of notice that:

1. This exaggeration has been made with regard to the three caliphs that their names along with their patronym (*kunya*) were inscribed on the throne of God and related by the Prophet (S) so that nobody would have doubts about the religious legitimacy of these three caliphs.
2. The reason why the inscription mentions the unjust killing of Uthman but not Umar is because whether Uthman was killed for a just cause was always a matter of dispute, and the battles of Jamal and Siffin were brought about because of this. The fabricators of this hadith wanted to establish the unjust killing of Uthman by putting the words into the mouth of the Prophet (S) to make it clear that Uthman was killed unjustly and attained martyrdom as testified by God on His Throne. As such, no one is entitled to doubt the unjust killing of Uthman.
3. Imam Jaʿfar al-Sadiq (a) has been mentioned in the chain of transmission so that the Shiʿis would

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<sup>42</sup> *Taʾrikh Baghdad*, 10:264.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 10:265 and *al-Ghadir*, 5:327.

believe in its authenticity and not doubt the religious legitimacy of the caliphate of Uthman and his unjust killing.

### Water in a Gold Bowl Descended for Abu Bakr

Muhammd b. Ziyad on the authority of Hudhayfah reports:

The Messenger of God (S) was offering his morning prayers with us. When the prayers were completed, he turned towards us and asked: "Where is Abu Bakr al-Siddiq?" Abu Bakr from the last row of the congregation said: "I am here, I am here O Messenger of God." The Prophet (S) commanded that the path be opened for Abu Bakr to come to the front. He said: "O Abu Bakr, come close to me. Did you join the prayers with me after the first *takbir*?" Abu Bakr replied: "O Messenger of God, I was in the first row and after you recited the *takbir*, I did so likewise. When you had commenced the recitation of Surah al-Hamd (chapter one of the Qur'an), I fell into doubt about validity of my ablution (*wudu*) and therefore went towards the fountain to renew my ablution. A caller unexpectedly called upon me and said: 'Take a look in front of your feet.' I looked towards them and saw a golden bowl full of water that was whiter than snow, sweeter than honey and softer than butter. On top of the bowl there was a green handkerchief on which was written: *La ilaha Illal-lah, Muhammad Rasul-ul-laah, al-Siddiq Abu Bakr*. I removed the handkerchief from the bowl and used the water to renew my ablution. Thereafter, I put back the handkerchief over the bowl and joined with you in



prayers when you were in the state of first genuflection (*ruku'*) and I finished the prayers with you." The Messenger of God said: "O Abu Bakr, let me give you glad tidings. The one who brought water for you for the prayers was Gabriel and the one who brought for you the handkerchief was Michael and the one who held on to my knees so that you would have time to join me in prayers was Israfil."<sup>44</sup>

Muhammd b. Ziyad who is the reporter of this forged and ridiculous anecdote is, according to Allamah Amini, the one who invented this hadith. This anecdote is worthy of analysis:

1. This water that is mentioned in the story to be whiter than snow, sweeter than honey, and softer than butter is mixed (*mudaf*) water and in a golden bowl. According to the legal rulings, ablution would be void in such a case.
2. According to Islamic rulings, congregational prayers must be kept as short as possible so that the weakest person would not suffer difficulty. Hazrat Ali (a) used to give directives to the leaders of other cities: "Observe the congregational prayers at such a speed so that the weakest person can follow you, and do not be a source of trouble for them"<sup>45</sup> It is natural that the Prophet would follow this directive and from this story we learn

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<sup>44</sup> *al-Ghadir*, 5:327.

<sup>45</sup> Imam Ali b. Abi Talib, *Nahj al-balaghah*, compiled by al-Sharif al-Radi, tr. Sayed Ali Reza (Rome: European Islamic Cultural Center, 1984), Letter no. 52, p. 533.

that he wanted to follow this ruling but while he was in the first genuflection (*ruku'*), Israfil took hold of his knees against his will so that he would be forced to wait in this state. *Ruku'* was prolonged to such length so that Abu Bakr could perform the ablution (*wudu'*) with the heavenly water and join the congregational prayer! Is it possible that Israfil was not aware of this ruling regarding prayers that they be performed as quickly as possible? Does God give Israfil dominance over the Prophet (S) so that the latter could not implement the ruling of Islam regarding congregational prayers? Or, did this legal ruling change because of Abu Bakr and the Prophet (S) was not aware of it such that Israfil was responsible to implement it?

3. Was water so rare in Medina that people in congregational prayers used to perform *tayammum* (substitute for ablution with water) and because of the absence of water God commands Gabriel to send out heavenly water in a golden bowl for Abu Bakr? Or, is it because of the personality of Abu Bakr, who later became the caliph, that God sent down this special water? If it is on account of the high status and personality of Abu Bakr that God desired to bestow this miraculous act, why was this not done in the case of the Prophet (S)?!
4. Why is it that Abu Bakr did not preserve the golden bowl, water and handkerchief in order to show them to the Prophet (S) and his companions so that they could drink from it and

enjoy. Further, they could testify that God had put the name of Abu Bakr on that heavenly handkerchief with the attribute of *al-siddiq* (the truthful) after the testimony of the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad? This would have helped Abu Bakr at Saqifah so that there would have been no disagreement on the qualification of Abu Bakr to be the caliph and Sa'd b. Ubadah would have been spared death and it would not have been necessary to obtain the consent of Imam Ali (a) by attacking his house and dragging him to the mosque to forcibly obtain his allegiance?!

The answer to all these questions can be summarized in one sentence. Excessive love in favor of the caliphs coupled with ignorance are the primary ingredients that prompted fabricating of virtues, supposedly, in order to benefit Islam by pouring out the passionate love for the caliphs! Observe how much harm and destruction is imposed on Islam as a result of these kinds of excesses.

### Names of the Caliphs on the Heavenly Leaves

On the authority of Ali b. Jamil Waddah who reports from the Messenger of God (S) that he is reported to have said: "There is no tree in paradise but that the leaves on it have written on them: *La ilaha illal-lah, Muhammad Rasul-ul-lah, Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, Umar al-Faruq, Uthman dhu al-Nurayn*."<sup>46</sup>

Ali b. Jamil Waddah is an ignoble liar in the opinion of the experts on biographies of the narrators of hadiths

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 5:299.

(*rijal*). Here a question could be posed: if it is decreed to write the names of those who are close to God on each of the leaves then why not the names of the distinguished messengers such as Noah and Abraham?!

### Mu'awiyah in the Garden Beneath the Throne

On the authority of the blind Abdallah b. Hafs who reports on the authority of Anas b. Malik from the Messenger of God (S):

None of my companions will be able to conceal themselves from me in paradise with the exception of Mu'awiyah whom I won't be able to see for eighty years. Thereafter, he will appear on a she camel exuding excellent fragrance coming towards me and I will ask him: 'Where have you been?' He will reply: 'I was in the garden beneath the divine throne and God and I were engaged in a private conversation Who said to me: "This honor has been given to you in return for the insults and hate that was spewed against you in the world"'<sup>47</sup>

We ought to ask the one who forged this report whether the Messenger of God (S) is within the prohibited degree of Mu'awiyah in terms of family kinship (*namahram*) such that when God desires to have a private conversation with Mu'awiyah for eighty years, it is necessary to conceal him from the sight of Muhammad (S) in the garden beneath the throne of God?!

This hadith has been narrated by Abdallah b. Adi Jorjani on the authority of the blind Abdallah b. Hafs who says:

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<sup>47</sup> *Mizan al-i'tidal*, 2:410.

"This blind man used to dictate to me forged hadiths and I have no doubt that this hadith has been fabricated by him as well."

Dhahabi in *Mizan al-i'tidal* says: "It is not befitting for Ibn Adi to write hadith from this wretched whose physical eyes and heart were blinded."

If we accept that Ibn Adi fabricated this hadith from the blind Abdallah b. Hafs, then it is apparent that these people lived during the middle of the tenth century of the common era, which corresponds to the time of the blind person. At this same time, Mu'awiyah had disciples who would be prepared to purchase these kinds of exaggerated virtues. And it is natural that the more one exaggerated the virtues, the greater would be its attractiveness for the disciples of Mu'awiyah and consequently produce for them larger rewards from Mu'awiyah and greater fame. In such a situation, it is not surprising that people would make up virtues in favor of Mu'awiyah:

1. The Messenger of God said: "Gabriel brought a golden pencil from God and said: 'God sends his greetings to you and says that this pen has been gifted to Mu'awiyah from the top of the throne. Give this pen to Mu'awiyah and tell him that he should write *Ayat al-kursi* (Qur'an, 2:255-57) with it so that I can reward him the same number of times that this *Ayat al-kursi* is recited till the Day of Judgment by the people in the world.'"<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *al-Ghadir*, 5:304.

2. The Messenger of God (S) said: "God has made Gabriel, myself and Mu'awiyah the trustworthy recipients of revelation and Mu'awiyah was almost designated as the Messenger because of his expansive knowledge and trustworthiness."<sup>49</sup>
3. The Messenger of God (S) tells Mu'awiyah: "On the day of resurrection you will be brought forth wearing an illuminated robe placed on your shoulder whose outward form will be made up of mercy and inward of the pleasure of God. On the Day of Resurrection you will take pride in this. This honor has been given to you because you were the scribe of revelation."<sup>50</sup>

All these exaggerated virtues in favor of Mu'awiyah have been fabricated to satisfy his disciples and to obtain monetary benefit so that they could pay tribute to this equitable and just companion of the Prophet (S)!

### Picture of A'isha on the Heavenly Cloth

Khatib Baghdadi on the authority of Muhammad b. Hasan b. Azhar reports:

The Messenger of God (S), after the migration from Mecca to Medina, was in search of a marriage partner. Gabriel brought for him a heavenly cloth that was one meter in length and about one span in width. On that cloth, there was

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 5:262

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 5:276.

a beautiful picture that was never seen before by anyone. Gabriel opened up this cloth in front of the Prophet (S) and said to him: "O Muhammad, God has given instruction that you marry with the person that matches this picture." The Prophet (S) asked him: "How is it possible for me to find a person identical to this picture?" Gabriel replied: "God says that you should marry with the daughter of Abu Bakr al-Siddiq." As a result, the Prophet (S) went to the house of Abu Bakr and knocked on his door and told Abu Bakr upon the door being opened: "God has instructed me to marry your daughter." Abu Bakr had three daughters and he brought them all in front of the Prophet (S). The Messenger of God (S) realized that the heavenly picture matched with that of A'isha and signaled to her while saying: "God has directed me to marry this girl," and he married her.<sup>51</sup>

Khatib says: "In my estimation, this hadith has been forged by Muhammad b. Hasan Azhar and he related it by appending to it a reliable chain of transmission to give it credibility."

From this it becomes apparent that the fabricators of hadith, at times, would create a strong and a reliable chain of transmission so that the people would be duped into accepting the hadith as true.

It must be said, based on this hadith, that one of the tasks of the caretakers of paradise is to prepare

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<sup>51</sup> *Ta'rikh Baghdad*, 2:193.

pictures and one of the responsibilities of Gabriel is to be an intermediary for a select people who would like to get married!

The excessive love that prompts one to fabricate reports with the intention of raising the status of the beloved also blinds him/her to the negative consequences of such ludicrous reports. The purpose of forging this hadith in favor of A'isha is to establish:

1. A'isha was the prettiest woman that God ever created and no one had ever seen someone of such unique beauty.
2. A'isha was specially chosen by God and accordingly He sent a special command by way of Gabriel to the Prophet (S) to marry her.
3. The Messenger of God (S), upon seeing the picture of A'isha on the heavenly cloth, decided to go to the house of Abu Bakr in person instead of sending someone else on his behalf.

### Analysis

1. The fabricator of the above-mentioned hadith in praise of A'isha was so overwhelmed by his love for her that he was oblivious of the need to create the hadith in such a manner that it would not conflict with events in history, such as:
  - a. In this hadith it is reported that the Prophet (S) proposed to A'isha after the



migration (*hijrah*) whereas Ibn Athir records from the mouth of A'isha herself that the Prophet (S) contracted marriage with her before the *hijrah*.<sup>52</sup>

- b. In this hadith it says that the Prophet (S), upon receiving the picture of A'isha on the heavenly cloth, personally goes to request her hand in marriage whereas Ibn Athir records from the mouth of A'isha that after the death of Khadijah, Khawlah bint Hakam, wife of Uthman b. Mazghun, suggested to the Prophet (S) that he should marry. When the prophet asked to whom, she recommended A'isha. Khawlah herself, upon the acceptance of the Prophet (S), goes to the house of Abu Bakr to make this formal proposal.<sup>53</sup>
- c. In the above-mentioned hadith, it is said that Abu Bakr presented three of his daughters to the Prophet (S) and because the heavenly picture was in accord with A'isha she was, as a consequence, designated as the wife of the Prophet (S). Whereas, in actuality, Abu Bakr in his lifetime had only two daughters and the third one was born after his death. The two daughters were:

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<sup>52</sup> Izz al-Din Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-ghabah*, 5 vols. (Tehran: Intisharat-e Isma'iliyyan, 1957), 5:502.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

Asma whose mother was Qutaylah bint Abd al-Uzza and she was married to Zubayr and gave birth to Abdallah b. Zubayr. The second daughter was A'isha whose mother was Umm Ruman bint Amir. Thus, at the time when the Prophet (S) wanted to marry A'isha, Abu Bakr had only two daughters and not three.<sup>54</sup> In addition, Asma had already gotten married with Zubayr and was pregnant at the time when the Prophet (S) came to ask for the hand of A'isha in marriage.<sup>55</sup> As a result, at the time the Prophet (S) went to the house of Abu Bakr to marry A'isha the former had only one daughter. However, the fabricator of this hadith prepared a scene in which three daughters were presented to the Prophet (S) at the house of Abu Bakr and the Prophet (S) selected A'isha from the three because the heavenly picture was identical to A'isha.

Once again, witness the destructive consequences on Islam that have been brought about due to the excessive love that is coupled with ignorance.

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<sup>54</sup> Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Jarir al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh al-umam wa al-muluk*, 8 vols. (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-a'lami, 1992), 2:616 and Izz al-Din Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi al-ta'rikh*, 9 vols. (Misr: Idarat al-tiba'ah al-muniriyyah, 1929), 2:420.

<sup>55</sup> *Usd al-ghabah*, 5:493.

Heavenly Houris for Uthman

Khatib Baghdadi on the authority of Muhammad b. Sulayman b. Hisham relates a hadith on the authority of the Prophet (S): "On the night of ascension (*mi'raj*) when I reached the fourth heaven, suddenly an apple dropped in my hand. It opened and from inside of it, a *houri* came out while laughing hilariously at the same time. I asked the *houri*: 'Tell me, who are you for?' She replied: 'I belong to the future martyr—Uthman b. Affan.'"<sup>56</sup>

Khatib Baghdadi says: "This report is repudiated because the chain of transmission is sound with the exception of Muhammad b. Sulayman b. Hisham who is guilty of fabricating this report. And, Dhahabi says that this report is forged."<sup>57</sup> Once again, this demonstrates that people used to create hadiths and attach them with a sound chain of transmission in order to deceive the people into their acceptance.

One ought to ask the one who forged this hadith that what wisdom lies behind creating a *houri* in the fourth heaven before the killing of Uthman and force her to stay alone while anticipating the murder of Uthman? Could God not create a *houri* immediately upon the death of Uthman?

Further, why was only one *houri* created for Uthman and not more? At the time when Uthman was encircled and subsequently killed at the age of ninety, he had four

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<sup>56</sup> *Ta'rikh Baghdad*, 5:297.

<sup>57</sup> *Mizan al-i'tidal*, 2:386.

wives.<sup>58</sup> Is it appropriate that now in paradise, where everyone is youthful, only one *houri* is created for Uthman? What was there to prevent a legion of *houris* to come out of that apple for the killed caliph and not just one *houri*?

### Exaggeration Regarding *Sahih Bukhari*

The passionate lovers did not confine themselves to fabricating virtues in favor of personalities, rather many of them did the same regarding books such as the case of *Sahih Bukhari* regarding which it is said: "The book *Sahih Bukhari* is second only to the Qur'an; during a plague if *Sahih Bukhari* is recited in a house, the people residing in it will be protected from it; anyone who reads *Sahih Bukhari* in its entirety will be able to have any of his wishes fulfilled and it will dispel all his troubles and afflictions; a ship on which this book of hadith is placed will never be sunk." It is customary amongst many scholars that whenever confronted with a difficult situation, parts of this book of hadith would be distributed amongst them to read so that they would be relieved of this calamity.

At the time when Iraq was part of the Ottoman empire and the ships used to employ energy from steam, deputies from the parliament of Iraq, when setting up a budget for the ministry of war, allocated a substantial amount towards naval force to cover the expenses of reading *Sahih Bukhari* in order to remain safe from any danger. One of the members of parliament by the name of Zakhawi said: "The budget allocation for reading *Sahih Bukhari* ought to

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<sup>58</sup> Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi al-ta'rikh*, 3:186.

come from the share of the ministry of endowment whereas the ships ought to rely upon the energy from "*bukhar* (steam)" and not from "*Sahih Bukhari*." This statement of Zahhawi caused the other members of parliament to rebel against him and it resulted in a sedition once the issue entered the public arena.

In summary, the extremists exaggerated the grandeur of *Sahih Bukhari* to such an extent that it became equated to a sanctified and heavenly book regarding which it was said that after the Qur'an it is the most authentic work on the face of the world. As a result, people were reluctant and afraid to subject this book to any criticism and anyone who did so became the object of ridicule and attack. Dhahabi, an expert on *rijal*, when he came to the conclusion that a hadith from *Sahih Bukhari* was false, could not muster enough courage to say so explicitly. However, if the *Sahih Bukhari* had not become glorified and sanctified, it would have been possible for Dhahabi to say with ease that particular hadiths had been fabricated.<sup>59</sup>

It is important to note that this gentleman Bukhari whose collection of hadiths has been exaggerated to this extent is the same person who had no qualms in recording hadiths from the wretched *Kharijites* such as Umran b. Hattan who is known to have composed a poem in praise of Ibn Muljim, the assassinator of Imam Ali (a). However, he fails to record even a single hadith on the authority of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a).<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> *al-Imam al-Sadiq*, 1:78-9.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:80-1.

### Exaggeration Regarding *al-Kafi*

Some people have made exaggerations regarding the book *al-Kafi*—a collection of hadiths compiled by Muhammad b. Ya'qub Kulayni. They say: "All the hadith reports in *al-Kafi* are authentic and reliable such that there is not even a single false hadith in that collection." Some have even exceeded this limit by claiming that *al-Kafi* was presented to Imam Mahdi (a) for verification and he said: "*al-Kafi* is sufficient for our Shi'is."<sup>61</sup> This story has, at times, been related from the pulpit and some people believe in it by imagining that since *al-Kafi* has been confirmed by Imam Mahdi (a), all the hadith reports in it must be reliable whereas in actuality, there are false hadiths and even hadiths that are contradictory to the Qur'an in *al-Kafi*. Further, hadiths in this collection have been recorded from narrators who were extremists, liars and fabricators of hadiths. Thus, naïve people, at times, derive their belief system from *al-Kafi* based on hadiths that are reported by dishonest individuals who had forged hadiths. We are going to present proofs to demonstrate that *al-Kafi* was never confirmed or verified by Imam Mahdi (a):

1. Allamah Majlisi says: "Some of these bombastic people assert with certainty that the whole of *al-Kafi* was presented to Imam Mahdi (a) for confirmation because Kulayni was living in Baghdad at the time that some of the deputies of

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<sup>61</sup> *Al-Kafi*, 1:25 and Muhammad b. Ya'qub b. Ishaq al-Kulayni, *al-Usul min al-kafi*, 4 volumes [Arabic with Persian commentary and translation] ed. and transl. S. Jawad Mustafawi (Tehran: Daftar-e nashr-e farhang-e ahl-e bayt, n.d.), Introduction, p. 7.

the Imam (a) were also residing there. The glaring invalidity of such a statement is apparent to every rational human being."<sup>62</sup> It is evident that Allamah Majlisi regards these people as naïve and lacking in intellect and this verdict comes from a person who is a specialist and an advocate of the school of traditionists (*akhbari*).

2. The eminent traditionist, Mirza Husayn Nuri says: "... this rumor that *al-Kafi* was presented to Imam Mahdi (a) who is reported to have said that 'it is sufficient for our Shi'is' has no basis and there is no sign of this in the works of our scholars."<sup>63</sup> This is a frank and an honest statement from a specialist and an advocate of traditions from the Ahl al-bayt.
3. The traditionist Nuri records that the traditionist Astarabadi has said: "This statement that '*al-Kafi* has been confirmed by Imam Mahdi (a)' is not true and has no basis."<sup>64</sup> The statement made by Astarabadi, who was a zealous supporter and defender of the Akhbari school of thought and had extensive knowledge of the hadith reports must be valued highly on account of his expertise.
4. Kulayni himself does not accept that all the hadith reports in *al-Kafi* are true and authentic

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<sup>62</sup> Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, *Mir'at al-uqul* (Tehran: Dar al-kutub al-Islamiyyah, 1988-), 1:22.

<sup>63</sup> Husayn Taqi al-Nuri al-Tabarsi, *Khatimah mustadrak al-wasa'il*, 6 vols. (Qum: Mu'assasat al al-bayt li-ihya al-turath, 1995), 3:473-4.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:473-6.

because he incorporates hadiths that are contradictory with each other. For example, one hadith on the authority of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a) and another one on the authority of Imam Sadiq (a) who said: "When you witness the moon begin fasting and when you witness the moon at the end of the month of Ramadan, take it to mean the beginning of Shawwal."<sup>65</sup> The meaning of this report is that if, after the completion of twenty-nine days of fasting, the moon of the month of Shawwal is observed, then it means that the month of Ramadan is complete. It is possible that the number of days in the month of Ramadan could be twenty-nine or thirty. However, there are three hadiths attributed to Imam Sadiq (a) in which it says that the month of Ramadan is always thirty days and could never be twenty-nine days.<sup>66</sup>

It is obvious from this that Kulayni himself could not have believed in the hadith that says that the month of Ramadan is always thirty days and at the same time the hadith that the month of Ramadan can sometimes be twenty-nine days. Thus, one of these hadiths in the opinion of Kulayni is false. How is it possible that these two contradictory hadiths were supposedly presented to Imam Mahdi (a) who confirmed and verified them?<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> *al-Kafi*, 4:76-7.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 4:78-9.

<sup>67</sup> Shaykh Saduq is the only scholar who believes that the month of Ramadan is always thirty days and strongly refutes all other



Occasionally, Kulayni would include in *al-Kafi* hadith reports that were in conflict with his belief system. For instance, in *Usul al-Kafi* in the chapter on the number of Imams, he records five hadiths that indicate the number of Imams are thirteen in total. In particular, hadith no. 8, 9, 14, 17 and 18. Hadith no. 9 says that there are twelve Imams from the progeny of Fatima (a) in which three are Muhammad and three are Ali. In hadith no. 14, it says that twelve Imams are from the lineage of the Messenger of God (S) and Imam Ali (a). In hadith no. 8, 17 and 18 it says that the number of Imams are twelve from the progeny of the Prophet (S).<sup>68</sup>

It is self evident that when there are to be twelve Imams from the progeny of the Prophet (S) or Imam Ali (a) or Hazrat Fatima (a), the total number of Imams (a) would add up to thirteen once you include Imam Ali (a).

It is worth noting that in the chain of transmission of hadith no. 9 and 17, Abu al-Jarud, who was a Zaydi, is mentioned as one of the transmitters who regarded Zayd b. Ali b. al-Husayn as one of the Imams. It is quite likely that since he wanted to include Zayd amongst the designated Imams he made up a hadith which said that there are twelve Imams from the progeny of the Prophet (S) or from the progeny

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dissenting opinions and says that they lack insight and are to be regarded as people of innovation (*bid'ah*) from whom one should hide one's thoughts (*taqiyyah*)! *Khisal*, p. 531; *Man la yahduruh al-faqih*, p. 196.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 1:532-4.

of Fatima (a) excluding Imam Ali (a). Hadith no. 9 is explicit that the number of Imams are thirteen comprising three Imams from the progeny of Fatima (a) by the name of Muhammad and another three by the name of Ali. What is intended by three persons by the name of Ali are Ali b. al-Husayn (fourth Imam), Ali b. Musa al-Rida (eighth Imam) and Imam Ali Naqi (tenth Imam). Accordingly, three Imams from the progeny of Fatima (a) along with Imam Ali who is not from the progeny of the former would constitute thirteen Imams altogether which is contradictory to the belief of Kulayni, yet included in his compilation of hadiths. Is it in the realm of possibility that that these hadiths were presented to Imam Mahdi (a) and he confirmed their authenticity?

5. I counted the number of hadiths in *al-Kafi* under the section titled "Book of Proof (*Kitab al-hujjah*)" totaling 962. In the opinion of Allamah Majlisi, in his work titled *Mir'at al-uqul*, there are 236 hadiths that can be counted as *sahih* (sound or authentic), *hasan* (good, fair) and *muwatthaq* (reliable) from the perspective of the chain of transmission (*isnad*) and 726 hadiths are weak (*da'if*), unknown (*majhul*), *mursal* (interrupted link in the chain of transmission) and *marfu'* (elevated) and *mawquf* (link stops with one of the companions of the Prophet (S)) such that there is disagreement amongst the scholars about their validity. Thus, the portion of the number of hadiths that are reliable in the section on *Kitab al-hujjah* from *al-Kafi* are one-quarter and those that

are weak in the chain of transmission are three quarters.<sup>69</sup>

6. The number of hadith-reports in *al-Kafi*, compiled by Kulayni during the minor occultation of Imam Mahdi (a), is 15,181 out of which 5,072 are deemed sound and valid (*sahih*) and 9,485 are considered weak (*da'if*). The rest are evaluated as good (*hasan*), trustworthy (*muwatthaq*) and strong (*qawi*). Further, there are 2,118 chains of transmission (*isnad*) of hadiths in this collection that contain names of individuals who did not belong to the Twelver Shi'i school of thought.<sup>70</sup>

#### Exaggeration Regarding Ibrahim, Son of the Prophet (S)

Ibrahim, the child of the Prophet from his wife, Mary the Coptic, died in his infancy before completing the age of two. At the time of his death, a solar eclipse took place and as a result people began to say that the reason for this eclipse was the death of Ibrahim. This rumor progressively spread amongst the people such that the Prophet (S) decided to clarify this issue in public after reciting the Opening Chapter and praising God: "O people, without doubt the sun and

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<sup>69</sup> The eminent Hajj Mirza Abu al-Hasan Sha'rani writes in the introduction to *Usul-e kafi* that is edited by Mawla Salih Mazandarani: "The majority of the chains of transmission (*isnad*) of the hadiths contained in *Usul al-Kafi* are weak."

<sup>70</sup> Hashim Ma'ruf al-Hasani, *Dirasat fi al-Kafi wa al-Sahih li al-Bukhari* (1968), p. 138 and p. 161. According to Shaykh Tusi, the number of traditions in *al-Kafi* is 16,199. The discrepancy is probably due to his counting identical hadith-reports recorded in different sections of the book.

the moon are two signs that reflect the majesty of God that operate under the command of God and are obedient to Him. Neither the sun nor the moon undergoes change on account of the death of someone. However, when the eclipse does take place, you ought to offer the sign prayers." Thereafter, the Prophet (S) came down the pulpit and offered the prayer for the solar eclipse with the public.<sup>71</sup>

A question arise: how is it that some people thought the solar eclipse came about because of the death of Ibrahim? People who dearly loved the Prophet (S) and at the same time did not know the natural cause of the eclipse, when they saw the innocent infant of the Prophet (S) lose his life which made him heartbroken, they fancied that the loss of this innocent child impacted the world in such a way that the eclipse came about. Thus, the cause of this exaggeration is excessive love of the Prophet (S) combined with ignorance of the natural cause of the solar eclipse. What is important to note is that, unlike the worldly leaders who try to exploit every opportunity from public ignorance to sanctify themselves and to solidify their power, the Prophet (S) undertook to dispel the ignorance of the public by informing them that the eclipse had no relation with the death of his son Ibrahim so that the root of extremism would not take hold and deceive the public.

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<sup>71</sup> Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Barqi, *al-Mahasin*, ed. al-Sayyid Jalal al-Dini al-Husayni, 2 vols. (Tehran: Dar al-kutub al-Islamiyyah, 1951), 2:313, hadith no. 31.

### Exaggeration Regarding the Virtues of Reading the Qur'an

Some of the naïve people with sincere intentions forged hadiths in favor of reciting the Qur'an and exaggerated the spiritual merit of reciting the Qur'an. For example, anyone who recites so and so chapter from the Qur'an would be entitled to such and such amount of spiritual reward (*tharwab*). Nuh b. Abi Maryam forged 114 hadiths in accordance with the number of chapters in the Qur'an that exaggerated the merits of reading each of the chapters of the Qur'an. When he was asked the reason for doing this, he replied: "I observed that people had less motivation for reading the Qur'an in comparison to the *Fiqh* of Abu Hanifah and *Maghazi* of Muhammad b. Ishaq. I wanted to generate greater desire on the part of the public towards the Qur'an and consequently I fabricated these hadiths on the virtues of reading the Qur'an for the sake of gaining the pleasure of God."<sup>72</sup>

The reason for this exaggeration on the reward for reciting the chapters of the Qur'an is excessive love for the Qur'an along with ignorance and stupidity. It is interesting to observe that these forged rewards in favor of reading the chapters of the Qur'an are attributed to the Prophet (S) while remaining oblivious and inattentive to the fact that defamation of the Prophet (S) is a major sin regarding which the Prophet (S) forewarned that the plight of one who attributes a lie to him will be consignment to hell fire. And sometimes, these fabricators of hadiths paid attention to this warning of the Prophet (S) but tried to explain it away by recourse to another interpretation and excuse.

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<sup>72</sup> *al-Ghadir*, 5:275-6.

Allamah Amini from Qurtubi in his book titled *al-Tadhkar* quotes from Hakim and other prominent traditionists the example of an ascetic who was responsible for forging false hadiths in praise of reciting the chapters of the Qur'an. When the ascetic was reminded of the painful punishment awaiting those who attribute lies to the Prophet (S), he replied: "The Prophet (S) had said that anyone who makes up a lie against him will be consigned to hell fire, however, I am creating hadiths for the sake of benefiting the Prophet (S)."<sup>73</sup>

### Exaggeration Regarding the Imams (a)

One of the harmful occurrences that finds presence in the history of Islam and its effect is still present has to do with exaggeration of the virtues of the Imams (a). This was the cause of great aggravation and displeasure of the Imams (a). They showed their displeasure in their words and actions, and openly opposed such kinds of exaggerations.

There are three fundamental reasons that can be gleaned from history and hadiths for the emergence of extremism in praising the Imams (a):

1. Exaggerated traditions regarding the Imams (a) fabricated by their enemies so as to bring blame and censure on the followers of the Imams (a) for being extremists and cause them to be accused of having become unbelievers (*kafir*). At the same time, this would cause people to reject the Imams

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

(a) resulting in their isolation and seclusion from the people.<sup>74</sup>

2. The desire of pleasure-seeking individuals to make things that were prohibited into things that were permissible, such as drinking alcohol, debauchery, and moral depravity and to encourage others to abandon their prayers and fasting. Because they wanted to bring this situation about in a religious atmosphere, these pleasure-seekers were forced to fabricate traditions. As such, people such as Abu al-Khattab claimed to have been appointed as a prophet by Imam Sadiq (a) so that he could authorize performance of evil deeds and abandonment of obligatory acts. In order to give validity to his claim of prophethood, he asserted that Imam Sadiq (a) was God.<sup>75</sup>
3. Exaggerated love and adoration of the Imams (a) on the part of his zealous supporters led them towards extremism. For example, elevating the status of Imam (a) to be the creator and the manager of the whole universe.

The above three reasons are foundational and I will elaborate on them in the following pages, but first let us bring forth some of the hadiths attributed to the Imams

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 5:276 and Ali b. al-Husain b. Babawayh (Shaykh Saduq), *Uyun akhbar al-Rida*, ed. al-Sayyid Mahdi al-Husayni Lajawardi, 2 vols (Qum: al-Mirza Muhammad Rida al-Mashhadi, 1957), 1:304.

<sup>75</sup> Sa'd b. Abdallah Abi Khalaf al-Ash'ari al-Qummi, *Kitab al-maqalat wa al-firaq*, ed. Jawad Mashkur (Tehran: Mu'assasa-e matbu'at-e ata'i, 1963), p. 53.

(a) in which they vehemently oppose extremism and dissociate themselves from the extremists and advise the Shi'is not to be deceived or fall into the trap of these exaggerators:

Hadith 1: Sadir says: "I told Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a) that there is a group who believes that the Imams (a) are all divine and part of godhood and they bring forth evidence from the Qur'an to prove this: 'It is He who is God in heaven and God on earth; He is the All Wise, the All Knowing' (Qur'an, 43:84). Imams Sadiq (a) replied: 'O Sadir, my ears, eyes, skin, flesh, blood and hair dissociates and distances from this claim and God as well dissociates from these claims. Those who say this do not belong to my religion and the religion of my grandfather, and on the Day of Judgment when God gathers me with these people, God will be very angry and displeased with them.'" <sup>76</sup>

Hadith 2: Hasan b. Jahm reports: "Ma'mun said to Imam Rida (a): 'It has come to my attention that there is a group of people who exaggerate about you and have exceeded the limits.' Imam (a) replied: 'My father on the authority of their father and so on till the Prophet (S) narrated a report in which he said: "Do not elevate my status to a level that is higher than my true status because God prior to making me a Prophet (S) had made me His servant. God says in the Qur'an, 'No person to whom God has given the Scripture, wisdom, and prophethood would ever say to people, "Be my servants, not God's."'"

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<sup>76</sup> Muhammad b. Hasan Hurr al-Amili, *Ithbat al-huduh bi al-nusus wa al-mu'jizah*, ed. Hashim Rasuli, 7 vols. (Qum: al-Matba'ah al-ilmiyyah, 1959-60), 3:746, hadith no. 9.



[He would say], 'You should be devoted to God because you have taught the Scripture and studied it closely'" (Qur'an, 3:79).

Imam Ali (a) says: "Two groups of people will be destroyed and I have no share in their sin. One who exaggerates about me out of love for me and the other on account of hate towards me. We dissociate ourselves and are exempt from those who exaggerate about us and promote us to a level higher than our true station in the same manner as Jesus, son of Mary, will distance himself from those Christians who had exaggerated about him."<sup>77</sup>

Hadith 3: Alqamah relates a hadith on the authority of Imam Sadiq (a) who said: "O Alqamah! How strange are the statements made by people regarding Imam Ali (a) that such a great disparity exists between those who claim that Imam Ali (a) is God and those who say that he is an evil doer?! And without a doubt, it is easier for Imam Ali (a) to tolerate the claim of those who call him an evil doer in comparison to those who attribute to him divinity and lordship."<sup>78</sup>

Hadith 4: Zurarah reports that he asked Imam Sadiq (a): "There is a person from the lineage of Abdallah b. Saba who believes in *tafwid*." Imam asks Zurarah: "What is *tafwid*?" He replied: "They say that God created Muhammad (S) and Ali (a) and entrusted them with full power and authority over the universe. Thereafter, these two created others and gave them sustenance, life and death." Imam (a) said: "They attribute a lie and they are

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 3:750, hadith no. 25.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 3:753, hadith no. 31.

enemies of God. When you return to them, relate the Qur'anic verse: 'Say [Prophet], "Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth?" Say, "God." Say, "Why do you take protectors other than Him, who can neither benefit nor harm even themselves?" Say, "Are the blind equal to those who can see? And are the depths of darkness equal to the light?" Have the partners they assign to God created anything like His creation? Is their creation indistinguishable from His? Say, "God is the Creator of all things: He is the One, the All Compelling"' (Qur'an, 13:16). Upon my return, I informed him of what Imam Sadiq (a) had said as a result of which he got perplexed and had no response."<sup>79</sup>

Hadith 5: Fudayl b. Yasar relates that Imam Sadiq (a) said: "Guard yourself from people who are exaggerators so that they cannot misguide your youths when they attribute lordship to the Prophet (S) and the Imams (a). Without a doubt, those who are extremists are the worse creation of God because they reduce the grandeur of God and bestow lordship on those who are the servants of God. I swear by God that the extremists are worse than Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians and polytheists. When the extremists come to us to become our disciples, we do not accept them but those who are guilty of extremism out of ignorance and naivety, we do accept them." Imam (a) was asked the reason for this distinction to which he replied: "Because the exaggerator has a habit of neglecting prayers, fasting, offering zakat and pilgrimage and is not able to give up this bad habit and return back to the obedience of God. However, the one who is ignorant and naïve, upon gaining insight and knowledge about God,

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 3:756, hadith no. 41.

resumes the obligatory acts in religion and returns back to the obedience of God.”<sup>80</sup>

Hadith 6: It is related on the authority of Abdallah b. Muskan that someone informed Imam Sadiq (a) that a person says about him: “You are the one who decrees the sustenance of people.” Imam (a) responded: “Nobody decrees our sustenance except God. There was an occasion when I myself was in need of food for my family and because of that I was distressed. I became preoccupied with this worry until I was able to obtain the food for my family and, as a result, my worry was dispelled and I regained comfort again.”<sup>81</sup>

Hadith 7: It is related on the authority of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a): “Abdallah b. Saba claimed to be a prophet and said that Imam Ali (a) is God. This news reached Imam Ali (a) who summoned Abdallah b. Saba to his place. Upon his arrival, the Imam (a) asked him about his beliefs upon which he replied: ‘Yes, I have been inspired in my heart that you are God and I am a prophet.’ Imam Ali (a) told him: ‘Woe upon you. You are under the spell of Satan. Abandon this false notion and seek repentance.’ Consequently, the Imam (a) confined him to his place for three days and gave him an opportunity to repent but he did not do so. Thus, Abdallah b. Saba was thrown into the fire and Imam Ali

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 3:772, hadith no. 102. The label *muqassir* is applied to those who bring down the status of God and make him resemble His creation. In contrast, *ghali* is in reference to those who elevate the status of a creation to that of God. The latter had a habit of neglecting prayers, fasting and offering of zakat but this was not the case with the former group—*muqassir*.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

(a) said: 'Satan had misguided him because the former always came to him and put in this false notion into his heart.'<sup>82</sup>

Hadith 8: It is related on the authority of Hisham b. Salim that Imam Sadiq (a) said: "A group of people came towards Imam Ali (a) and said: 'Peace be upon you our Lord.' Imam Ali (a) asked them to repent for saying this but they did not agree to do so. Thus, two ditches next to each other were dug such that one was shallower than the other. They were both connected to each other by canals. One of the pits was set on fire while the group of extremists were placed in the other pit to make them suffer from the smoke of the fire from the first pit. Even in this situation, they were not prepared to abandon their false belief and opted to stay in the pit until they all died."<sup>83</sup>

It is said in another tradition that when Imam Ali (a) would set ablaze the extremists in fire, the latter would say: "Now, we have attained certainty that you are God because the son of your aunt whom you had sent as a prophet had said: 'None will be tortured by fire except by the Lord of the fire.'<sup>84</sup>

Please note that Imam Ali (a) gave instruction that the extremists be placed in the pit that was not ablaze with fire so as to give an opportunity to them to rectify their

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 3:768, hadith no. 81.

<sup>83</sup> *al-Kafi*, 7:257, hadith no. 8 and 7:259, hadith no. 18.

<sup>84</sup> Abd al-Hamid ibn Abi al-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-balagha*, ed. Muhammad Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim, 20 vols. (Beirut: Dar ahya' al-kutub al-arabiyyah, 1959-64), 5:6.

false beliefs and abandon extremism; however, in spite of the great discomfort experienced due to the smoke from the other ditch, they persisted in their false belief which is a contagious disease!

Hadith 9: Shaykh Saduq relates that Imam Rida (a) used to recite the following supplication: "God, I plead to you for my innocence from those who say things about me that exceed what is true and not in keeping with our right. God, I plead to you for my innocence from those who say things about us that we never said about ourselves. God, creation and absolute authority belong only to you whereas we can only be your servants and are in need of your assistance. God, you are our Creator and our Father. God, you are the only one deserving of Lordship and Godhood is in harmony with you alone. Thus, remove your blessings from the Christians and all those who reduce your grandeur [i.e. the extremists who regard the Imams (a) as God]. God, we are your servants and the children of your servants. We don't possess any power to cause benefit or harm. We have no discretion on bringing about our creation, death or renewal. God, we plead to you of our innocence from those who claim that we are the Lords of others just as Jesus (a) will seek dissociation from the Christians."<sup>85</sup>

Hadith 10: Abu Hashim Ja'fari relates the response given to him by Imam Rida (a) regarding the extremists (*ghulat*) and those who believe that God has entrusted his full power and authority (*mufawwidah*) to the Prophet and the Imams (a): "The extremists and exaggerators are unbelievers (*kafir*) and the *mufawwidah* are polytheists.

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<sup>85</sup> *Ithbat al-hudab*, 3:756.

Whosoever has social relationships with them, eats and drinks with them or gives them their daughter in marriage or accepts their daughter in marriage, entrusts them with deposits for safekeeping; testifies to the veracity of their statements or provides assistance to them will result in the exit of such a person from the guardianship of God, the Prophet and the Imams (a).<sup>86</sup>

The word "*ghulat*" is the plural of "*ghali*" which means to transgress the limits of fairness. "*Mufawwida*" is the active participle of "*tafwid*" which is an adjective that means to entrust to the Prophet or the Imams (a) or to both of them the full power and authority of God to manage the affairs of the universe after His creation. In this hadith, the *mufawwidah* are categorized as polytheists because they subscribe to the partnership with God in managing the affairs of the universe.

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 3:751, hadith no. 28.



## Chapter 2

### Ominous Triangle

We had stated earlier that there are three fundamental reasons for the emergence of extremism regarding the virtues of the Imams (a):

1. Exaggerated traditions regarding the Imams (a) fabricated by their enemies so as to bring blame and censure on the followers of the Imams (a) for being extremists and cause them to be accused of having become unbelievers (*kafir*). At the same time, this would cause people to reject the Imams (a) on account of these exaggerated reports which would lead to their isolation.<sup>87</sup>
2. The desire to make things that were prohibited into permissible behaviors such as drinking alcohol, debauchery, and moral depravity by pleasure-seeking individuals and to encourage others to abandon their prayers and fasting. Because they wanted to bring this situation about in a religious atmosphere, these pleasure-seekers were forced to fabricate traditions. As such, people like Abu al-Khattab claimed to have been appointed as a prophet by Imam Sadiq (a) so that he could authorize performance of evil deeds and abandonment of obligatory acts. In order to give validity to his claim of prophethood, he asserted that Imam Sadiq (a) was God.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> *Uyun akhbar al-Rida*, 1:304.

<sup>88</sup> *al-Maqalat wa al-firaq*, p. 53.



3. Excessive and sentimental love of the Imams (a) on the part of his zealous supporters that led them to exaggerate the virtues of the Imams (a) with the aim of spreading this ideology.

These three causes altogether take the form of a triangle that we will call "ominous triangle" because the effects emanating from them have been destructive, divisive and bitter for Islam and the Muslim world. We will elaborate below on each one of these aspects from the triangle.

### I First Aspect of the Ominous Triangle: Enemies of the Imams (a)

Some of the enemies of Islam employed a satanic stratagem by presenting themselves as the friends of the Imams (a) and fabricated hadith reports in praise of the Imams (a). Their objectives were to turn people away from the Imams (a) and stigmatize their followers as unbelievers on account of these exaggerated and un-Islamic reports.

It is evident from a number of aspects and from circumstantial evidence that these exaggerated reports had been spread for a long time and that it had reached the ears of people from different sectors and status such that it resulted in astonishment and amazement on the part of the genuine followers of the Imams (a). These disciples would approach the Imam (a) and ask him on the validity of these reports in order to remove this perplexity. For example, Ibrahim b. Abi Mahmud says: "I told Imam Rida (a): 'We obtain reports in praise of Imam Ali (a) and yourself from your enemies but have never heard them from you. Should we accept these

reports?' Imam replied: 'O son of Abi Mahmud, our enemies have fabricated hadith reports in our praise and have divided them into three categories: 1. Reports that are exaggerated regarding us. 2. Reports that bring down the status of God and elevate our status. 3. Reports that emphatically taunt and censure our enemies. Thus, when people hear the exaggerated reports pertaining to us—for example, that we have been endowed with Lordship—they accuse our Shi'is of unbelief by virtue of believing in our Lordship. Second, when people hear the reports that bring down the status of God<sup>89</sup> and elevate ours, they blame us and accuse us of transgression. Third, when hadith reports explicitly name the persons who are our enemies and magnify our displeasure regarding them by taunting and censuring them, this results in a reciprocal unethical reaction in the form of curses and taunts directed against us by the persons who are explicitly mentioned and also by their followers.'"<sup>90</sup>

From the above hadith, it is evident that during the time of Imam Rida (a) exaggerated hadith reports regarding the Imams (a) had been circulating and these had been fabricated by the enemies of the Imams (a) so that the

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<sup>89</sup> In all probability, *taqdir* which is the opposite of *ghuluww* means to bring down the status of God to the level of His creation. Shahrastani says: "The *Ghaliya* (the 'Extremists') are those who went to extremes regarding their imams, whom they excluded from the limitations of creatures and upon whom they bestowed divine qualities. Sometimes they likened an imam to God, at other times they likened God to man. Thus they fell into two extremes" (Muhammad b. Abd al-Karim al-Shahrastani, *Kitab al-milal wa al-nihal*, tr. A. K. Kazi and J. G. Flynn (London: Kegan Paul International, 1984), pp. 149-50.

<sup>90</sup> *Uyun akhbar al-Rida*, 1:304.

followers of the Imams (a) in the Muslim community would be labeled as unbelievers and excommunicated, and the Imams (a) themselves be isolated.<sup>91</sup>

### Naïve People Duped

The fabricators of these exaggerated reports were politically motivated. Regrettably, however, those who are naïve and simple-minded get duped into accepting these forged reports because of their excessive love of the Imams (a). This results even in their defending of these false reports and spreading of them widely. This belief system of extremism is one that has taken a strong hold from the time of the Imams (a) till today. Books that propagate this belief system are available in bookstores and circulate amongst the people. One example of such a work is the book of poetry of *Diwan* by Saghir Isfahani. We will bring out the approximate meanings of these verses from the Persian:

The manifestation of the power of God is Ali  
the creator is Ali

The ship of Noah that was in troubled water  
I swear by God, the captain was Ali

The one who placed fire on him  
and the one who rescued him was Ali

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<sup>91</sup> Bukhari has not recorded even a single hadith from Imam Sadiq (a) which is a reflection of the poisonous atmosphere surrounding the status of Imam Sadiq (a). It is necessary that those who revere the Imams (a) and believe in the grandeur of Islam to pay close attention to this hadith of Imam Rida (a) and avoid narrating fabricated traditions that would denigrate the status of Islam and the Imams (a).

The one who brought up Yusuf from the bottom  
of the pit to the throne is Ali

Musa who heard from the unseen every sound  
the author of which was Ali

The one for whose sake he brought forth  
a large serpent from cane was Ali<sup>92</sup>

To the moon, sun and all that moves and is stationery  
the one that provides illumination is Ali

There is no more than one system in both the worlds  
the founder of this system is Ali

One who changes the seasons  
summer and winter is Ali

One who said: "I am in the earth and the heavens  
created for all is Ali"<sup>93</sup>  
Hear this from Saghir Isfahani  
so that your heart and mind will bring vigor and joy

In the school of the mystics  
God is Ali and Ali is God<sup>94</sup>

Observe the manner in which Saghir Isfahani has made  
Ali (a) the one who gave refuge to Noah from the flood,  
Ibrahim from fire and Yusuf from the pit. He has made  
him to be the author of the call that said to Moses: "I am  
your Lord. Take off your shoes: you are in the sacred

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<sup>92</sup> Saghir Isfahani, *Diwan-e Saghir*, pp. 72-3.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 151.

valley of Tuwa" (Qur'an, 20:12); the one who brought forth a large serpent from the cane; giver of light to sun, moon and stars; builder of this world and the hereafter; creator of the heavens and the earth; creator of the humans; and finally in one word he made Ali into "God!" Take note that in the previous hadith no. 3, it would be easier for Ali (a) to tolerate if someone were to say that he is an evil-doer than to call him God.

Now, in our society these kinds of books are being spread and circulated with ease and there are no obstacles in their way because this extremist tendency has taken currency and is well-established. In addition, the public environment has been conducive to spreading these kinds of extremist thoughts!

A few years ago, a virtuous and noble person by the name of Haj Agha Muḥtaba Ayat used to say: "I heard that Saghīr Isfahānī had come to Najafabad (near Isfahan) and I went to see him and asked him: 'Do you really believe that Imam Ali (a) is God?' He replied: 'Yes.' I followed up: 'What do you mean when you say Ali (a) is God.' He replied: 'It means that Ali (a) created me, you and this world.' I asked him: 'What is your proof?' He replied: 'Ali (a) himself has said in *Nahj al-balagha*: "Our Lord created us first and after that we created them."<sup>95</sup> I said to him: 'The meaning of the statement of the Imam (a) is that God first sent out the blessing of religion and created us and nurtured us, and after that they molded human beings and educated them. Imam Ali (a) does not intend to say that "we created human beings" because this would be polytheism and unbelief.' Saghīr said: 'This

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<sup>95</sup> *Nahj al-balagha*, Letter no. 28, p. 488.

is all I have to say of what Ali (a) has said, "People are our creatures." No matter how much I debated with him, it was of no use and finally he said: 'Let all the people go to paradise because of their love of Ali (a) and I, on account of my love for Imam Ali (a), will go to hellfire.'<sup>96</sup> I bid him farewell and left after losing hope of convincing him."

Take note that in the statement of Imam Ali (a) from *Nahj al-Balagha*: "*inna sana'i' rabbana wa al-nas ba'd sana'i' la-na*" is in the plural form, i.e. we are the creatures of God and the purpose of the particle *inna* is to refer to the Ahl al-bayt. Now, it is appropriate to ask Saghir Isfahani that based on the fact that Imam Ali (a) employs "*inna*" does he still believe that all the members of the Ahl al-bayt together created the world and that Imam Ali (a) is amongst one of them? Would any Muslim make such a ludicrous statement?

It is important to note that *sana'i'* is the plural of *sani'ah* and the latter refers to one who is benevolent and provides moral upbringing. Ibn Abi al-Hadid says: "*Sani'ah* of the King is one who is benevolent to the King and raises his stature and reputation"<sup>97</sup> and Imam Ali (a) says: "*sani'u al-maal yazulu bi-zawalib*," "One who attains a status by way of wealth loses this status with the

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<sup>96</sup> "Two categories of persons will face ruin and destruction: he who loves me with exaggeration, and he who hates me intensely" *Nahj al-balagha*, Saying 117, p. 594 and "There will be those who love me and by means of this love, they will go to hell and there will be those who detest me and by means of this hate they will go to hellfire" (Ahmad b. Yahya b. Jabir Baladhuri, *Ansab al-Ashraf*, (Beirut: Mu'assat al-a'lami, 1974), p. 120.

<sup>97</sup> Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 15:194.

departure of wealth.”<sup>98</sup> Therefore, the meaning of the statement of Imam Ali (a) which is directed to Mu’awiyah is that God first bestowed the blessing of religion to us and then it reached the people through us. However, Saghir Isfahani, because of lack of knowledge of Arabic language and excessive love of the Imam (a), misinterprets the statement of Ali (a).

### Star on the House of Ali (a)

The enemies of the Imams (a) in order to make people abandon the Imams (a) did not content themselves with only fabricating hadiths regarding the divinity of the Imams (a), but they exploited all kinds of methods such as political and negative propaganda to attain their goal. One such example that is against the Imams (a) and intended to bring the Imams (a) under question is given below in the hadith report that is most likely fabricated.

Rabi’ah b. Muhammad related via a chain of transmission that reached Anas b. Malik:

One star descended from the sky and the Prophet (S) said: “Pay attention and see on whose house the star lands. The person of this home will be my successor after me.” Thus, we looked at it and it landed on the house of Imam Ali (a). A group said: “Muhammad (S) made a mistake due to his excessive love of Ali (a).” Therefore, two verses from the chapter of Star were revealed: “By the

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<sup>98</sup> *Nahj al-balagha*, Saying no. 147, p. 600.

setting star! Your companion has not strayed; he is not deluded" (Qur'an, 53:1-2).<sup>99</sup>

The author of *Mizan al-i'tidal* regarded this hadith as false and said: "Jorjani, who is a transmitter of this hadith has rejected the veracity of Rabi'ah b. Muhammad."<sup>100</sup> It is worthy to note that Rabi'ah is a transmitter from the Sunni school of thought and the experts from this school have also rejected him and viewed his reports as false. But, they did not go further by accusing him of being a Shi'i. It follows that we cannot say that this hadith originated from the Shi'i extremists; rather the original source was from the Sunni schools of thought.

In addition to the lack of integrity of the transmitters, this hadith also has other defects:

1. Sura Najm (chapter 53—The Star) was revealed in Mecca,<sup>101</sup> whereas Anas b. Malik, who is the narrator of this report, was a resident of Medina. During the *hijrah* (migration) of the Prophet (S) from Mecca to Medina, he was a small child of about 8 to 10 years old<sup>102</sup> and had not yet come to Mecca to have been present when this so-called star descended upon the house of Ali (a) to relate this report.

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<sup>99</sup> *Mizan al-i'tidal*, 2:45 and Abi al-Hasan Ali b. Muhammad Ibn Maghazili, *Manaqib Ali b. Abi Talib*, (Tehran: al-Maktabat al-Islamiyyah, 1982), p. 266.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:45.

<sup>101</sup> Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i, *al-Mizan fi tafsir al-Qur'an*, 20 vols. (Qum: Mu'assasat al-nashr al-Islami, n.d.), 19:25.

<sup>102</sup> *Usd al-ghabah*, 1:127.



2. Imam Ali (a) did not have a house in Mecca and as such he transferred from the house of Abu Talib to the house of the Prophet (S) and stayed in the same house before and after the start of the prophetic ministry. He was educated and brought up by the Prophet (S).<sup>103</sup> Consequently, Ali (a) did not have a house in Mecca for a star to descend upon. If we accept that the Sura Najm was the first chapter of the Qur'an that the Prophet disseminated for the believers and polytheists,<sup>104</sup> it would have to be during the early phase of the prophetic ministry and during that time Ali (a) had not yet reached the age of fifteen years. How is it possible for him to own a house upon which a star would descend when he was a young bachelor?!
  
3. If this anecdote is true, then in the verse dealing with the star, instead of *idha* it should have been *idh* because the former is used in places where the event has actually taken place and the intention is to relate a story, such as: "When (*idh*) they massed against you from above and below; your eyes rolled [with fear], your hearts rose into your throats, and you thought [ill] thoughts of God" (Qur'an, 33:10). Further, "*idha*" is employed in places where the intent is to relate a report that continuously takes place such as: "By the night when (*idha*) it darkens and the day when (*idha*) it lights up" (Qur'an, 92: 1-2). It is known that the disappearance of the night and the onset of the

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 4:17.

<sup>104</sup> *al-Mizan*, 19:25.

day takes places on an ongoing basis till the Day of Judgment. Consequently, the verse in question pertains to a situation that is continuous and ongoing and the meaning would be something like: "Swear by the star that descends and disappears" and it is known that both these characteristics regarding the star are ongoing and perpetual. Therefore, the verse does not deal with a star that had descended upon a house; rather the oath is taken by the star that perpetually rises and sets. In this verse mention is made of the setting of the star but there is no mention of the rising of the star. Therefore, this verse is not compatible with the descent of the star on the house of Imam Ali (a) because it does not relate a story that had happened in the past; rather it is a perpetual state that repeats every night and this will continue till the Day of Judgment.

4. It is known that some stars are stationary and some are in a state of movement and are many times the size of the earth. How is it possible for a star of this magnitude to descend upon a small house? Perhaps those who related this hadith were amongst the laity who believed that the stars are of the same size as seen by the naked eye from the earth.

Thus, it is evident that the hadith report on the descent of the star on the house of Imam Ali (a) is incompatible with the verse mentioned in Sura Najm because of the following reasons:

1. The chain of transmission of the hadith is not reliable.
2. It conflicts with the apparent meaning of the verse.
3. It does not reconcile with Imam Ali (a)'s facts in history.
4. It does not accord with the historical facts of Anas b. Malik.

I would not dismiss the possibility that the enemies of Imam Ali (a), by pretending to be his friends and followers, deliberately fabricated such reports in order to bring the whole matter of succession (imamat) to the Prophet (S) under question and scrutiny so that hadiths such as *Ghadir*,<sup>105</sup> *manzilat*,<sup>106</sup> "*ana madinat al-ilm*"<sup>107</sup> and many others of this type would be viewed with suspicion and censure. When hadiths that are riddled with so many defects become a proof for the succession of Imam Ali (a) to the Prophet (S) then any dispassionate and wise person, when he/she reads such types of hadiths and is unaware of others proofs in favor of Imam Ali (a)'s succession, would definitely become doubtful about the authenticity of his succession.

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<sup>105</sup> Name of an oasis between Mecca and Medina where the Prophet (S) halted after the Farewell Pilgrimage in which he declared to the people: "Do you not acknowledge that I have a greater claim on each of the believers than they have on themselves?" And they replied: "Most definitely, yes!" Then, he took Ali's hand and said: "Of whomsoever I am the *mawla*, then Ali is also his *mawla*...." This is viewed by the Shi'is as a clear evidence of the Prophet's designation of Ali as his direct successor.

<sup>106</sup> "Are you not content to have a position with respect to me that is analogous that Aaron had to Moses, except that there shall be no prophet after me."

<sup>107</sup> "I am the City of Knowledge and Ali is its gate."

### Hadith of the Descent of the Star in Shi'i Literature

Shaykh Saduq records the anecdote about the descent of the star on the house of Imam Ali (a) in his book titled *Amali* with minor differences amongst the various reports.<sup>108</sup> But, it should be noted that eminent scholars such as Saduq's intention of relating such hadith reports was not to establish or prove the succession of Imam Ali (a); rather because these hadiths were related by the Sunni sources, Saduq and other scholars found it attractive and appealing to relate them without certifying the authenticity of those reports.

Over and above this, if we were to examine the above hadith with the report on the descent of the star narrated by Hafiz Rajab Bursi, we would observe to what extent he has exaggerated and embellished this report that is so lacking in a reliable chain of transmission that if a movie was made out of this it would be a great success!

Majlisi in his *Bihar* has compiled all the reports dealing with the descent of the star on the house of Imam Ali (a) but not even one of them has a reliable chain of transmission, not to mention that there are differences between these hadith reports.<sup>109</sup> In some, it is reported that the event of the star took place in the year of the conquest of Mecca and in others it was after the event of Ghadir and in others still it happened during the illness of the Prophet (S). None of them can be reconciled with

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<sup>108</sup> Shaykh Saduq, *Amali* (Qum: Mu'assasat al-bi'thah, 1996), pp. 680-1.

<sup>109</sup> Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, 110 vols. (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-wafa', 1983), 35:272-84.

the timing of the revelation of Sura Najm that was revealed before the migration of the Prophet (S) from Mecca to Medina.

In the above hadith reports mentioned by Majlisi, there is dissent on whether the star descended during the day or night. In some reports it says that it came down after the night prayers<sup>110</sup> and in others it was during the dawn,<sup>111</sup> during the sunrise<sup>112</sup> or midday. It is reported that the light from this star was more intense than the light of the sun.<sup>113</sup> From this it is evident that the narrators of this report could not reconcile or co-ordinate among themselves and therefore each one wrote according to his wish and temperament. One of them has added that the star returned back to the sky.<sup>114</sup>

The Imams (a) have said categorically that any hadith that does not agree with the Qur'an must be rejected and thus hadiths of this type must be discarded.<sup>115</sup>

### Pious Hadith Transmitters in the Service of the Umayyads

The Umayyads had spread far and wide reports against the Imams (a) in order to bring down their status and stature and this negative propaganda took place for a

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 35:274, hadith no. 3 and 35:281, hadith no. 9.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 35:272, hadith no. 1.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 35:273, hadith no. 1.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 35:283, hadith no. 10.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 35:277, hadith no. 5.

<sup>115</sup> Muhammad b. Hasan al-Tusi, *Ikhtiyar ma'rifat al-rijal (Rijal al-Kashsh)*, edited by Mir Damad, Muhaqqiq Baqir Husayni and Sayyid Mahdi Raja'i, 2 vols. (Qum: Mu'assasah Al al-bayt (a), 1983), 2:490.

period of one century. The effect was that they contaminated the opinion of the people regarding Imam Ali (a) and his children to such an extent that even pious transmitters fell under this influence and believed that it would bring about divine pleasure if they were to be hostile against the Imams (a).

Hariz b. Uthman was a pious scholar who offered all his prayers at the mosque and would not exit from the mosque before cursing Imam Ali (a) seventy times with the intention of gaining closeness to God.

Isma'il b. Ayyash reports that I was in the company of Hariz b. Uthman on a trip from Egypt to Mecca during which the latter would curse Imam Ali (a) on a regular basis and in order to justify this attitude he would say: "the hadith which has been attributed to the Prophet (S) in which he says regarding Imam Ali (a): 'Are you not content to have a position with respect to me that is analogous that Aaron had to Moses, except that there shall be no prophet after me' was recorded incorrectly by the people. In actuality, the hadith read 'You are to me what Qarun was to Moses.' People mistakenly put the name of Harun in the place of Qarun. The latter was an enemy of Moses and the Prophet (S) desired to say that Ali (a) is likewise my enemy." Isma'il b. Ayyash asked Hariz b. Uthman from where he obtained such a report, to which he replied that he had heard this from Walid b. Abd al-Malik from the pulpit while he was delivering a sermon.<sup>116</sup>

Pay close attention that this Walid b. Abd al-Malik, who was an Umayyad caliph and supposedly the successor and the trustee of the Prophet (S), abuses his eminent

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<sup>116</sup> *al-Ghadir*, 5:294-5.

position in the Islamic Government by disseminating a fabricated hadith from the pulpit during Friday prayers. The intention was to bring down the status of Imam Ali (a) and gather ammunition against him so that the political environment would become polluted to such an extent that even pious hadith narrators like Hariz b. Uthman would, upon hearing the sermon of the caliph, believe in these reports, and become his disciples. As a result of believing in these concocted hadith reports he regarded Imam Ali (a) as the enemy of the Prophet (S), analogous to the position of Qarun to Moses and deserving of being cursed. Take note that a century of such poisonous propaganda by the Umayyads against Imam Ali (a) with all the resources at their disposal would necessarily produce a contaminated atmosphere in which the minds of the people would be readied to go against Imam Ali (a).

This was a political strategy that was adopted by the Umayyads and the Abbasids. They desired to create a non-conducive environment in which the people would have a negative opinion of the Imams (a) and subsequently keep aloof from them so that the number of their supporters would remain few. This would prevent them from aspiring to establish an Islamic government by expelling the oppressive ruling caliphs from their positions. To achieve this, the Umayyads and the Abbasids would fabricate exaggerated hadith reports that would attempt to prove the lordship of the Imams (a) so that the Muslims and the followers of monotheism (*tawhid*) would distance themselves from the Imams (a) and their disciples.<sup>117</sup> At times, they would interpolate

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<sup>117</sup> *Uyun akhbār al-Rida*, 1:304.

and distort hadiths like the hadith of *manzilat*<sup>118</sup> and substitute Qarun in the place of Harun to equate Imam Ali (a) as the enemy of the Prophet (S) so that his personality would be sullied.

## II Second Aspect of the Ominous Triangle: Pleasure-Seeking Group

As was mentioned earlier, the second group from the three groups who fabricated exaggerated hadith reports regarding the Imams (a) is comprised of those who were after the pleasures of this world. They sought to find a legal way that would be sanctioned by Islam to make lawful those things that were prohibited and to abandon the obligatory duties in order to pave the way for them to attain their worldly pleasures and convince the naïve group of believers to embrace this ideology. It was from this same group of believers that they intended to gather resources and increase in numerical strength in order to attain their goals. The way to do this was by bringing about a new law and religion so as to make all things that were prohibited to be lawful and to remove the obligations.

It is evident that a new religion demands a new prophet in order to use the vehicle of revelation to make all things that were prohibited into being lawful and to eliminate those religious obligations that were bestowed to discipline the humans, such as fasting. This was put under the shadow of divine commandments so that the public would pay heed to them and apply them in their lives.

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<sup>118</sup> See footnote no. 99.



In the time of Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a) there was a man by the name of Muhammad b. Abi Zaynab, popularly known as Abu al-Khattab, who made a claim of prophethood in order to attain the above objectives. He would say that "Imam Sadiq (a) is God and he has appointed me as the prophet." He was, to an extent, quite successful in his mission and was able to bring about a group of people who were convinced that drinking alcohol, gambling, theft, illicit marital relations and everything else that is prohibited in Islam had become lawful. Further, all religious obligations such as ritual prayer, fasting, major ablution, pilgrimage had been lifted up from the shoulders of the people by the mediation of this new prophet. In order to find religious justification for this stance, a Qur'anic verse was invoked: "God wishes to lighten your burden; man was created weak" (Qur'an, 4:28). In addition, they would say that all references in the Qur'an that speak of adultery, gambling and other sinful acts refer to people that one should avoid and keep aloof from. Likewise, prayers, fasting, and pilgrimage and other obligatory acts that are mentioned in the Qur'an refer to people who are from the group of Prophet Muhammad (S) and Imams (a). People have been instructed to obey them and recognize their significance and whosoever attains this state of cognizance (*ma'rifat*) is relieved of all the religious obligations and is subsequently able to do anything that he/she so desires.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> *al-Maqalat wa al-firaq*, pp. 51-2 and al-Hasan b. Musa al-Nawbakhti, *Firaq al-Shi'ah*, translated to Persian by Muhammad Jawad Mashkur (Tehran: Intisharat-e bunyad wa farhang-e Iran, 1974), pp. 222-3.

The group from Abu al-Khattab proclaimed that the paradise that is referred to in the Qur'an consists of the pleasures and the blessings of this world and likewise hellfire comprises tribulations and difficulties of this world—a world which will never perish.<sup>120</sup> It is clear that this group of people espousing the afore-mentioned doctrine paid no attention to the accountability on the Day of Judgment because they did not have a belief in such a concept. With this belief system they were able to commit sinful acts with ease and rob the wealth of the people.

At times, in order to exempt themselves from the religious obligations, they would invoke rational proofs. For instance, in order to dismiss the obligation of the major ablution after sexual intercourse (*ghusl-e janabat*), they would ask "where is the wisdom in the obligation to perform *ghusl* after emission of the sperm when the human being himself has been created from this very same substance?"<sup>121</sup>

By way of these kinds of proofs, the intent of this group was to free themselves from a guilty conscience and at the same time give themselves a license to engage in sinful acts.

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<sup>120</sup> Muhammad b. Abd al-Karim al-Shahrastani, *Kitab al-milal wa al-nihal*, tr. A. K. Kazi and J. G. Flynn (London: Kegan Paul International, 1984), p. 155.

<sup>121</sup> *al-Maqalat wa al-firaq*, p. 53.

Khatabiyya

This is how Shahrastani expounds on the group who were the followers of Abu al-Khattab:

These are the followers of Abu 'l-Khattab Muhammad b. Abu Zainab al-Asdi al-Ajda' ('the Mutilated One'), a *mawla* of Banu Asd, who claimed to be an adherent of Abu 'Abdullah Ja'far b. Muhammad al-Sadiq. When, however, Sadiq heard of his false and extravagant views about him, he not only dissociated himself from him and anathematized him, but also called upon his followers to dissociate themselves from him. He was very insistent on this, and went to great lengths in dissociating himself from Abu 'l-Khattab and in anathematizing him.

When Abu 'l-Khattab seceded from Sadiq, he claimed the imamate for himself. He said that imams are prophets firstly, and then divine beings. He believed in the divinity of Ja'far b. Muhammad and that of his forefathers. They are all, according to him, sons of God and beloved of him. Divinity is a light in the prophethood, and prophethood is a light in the imamate; it is impossible for the world to be without such signs and lights. He asserted that at this time Ja'far was the divinity. God, indeed, was not the sensible form which is seen by men; but when he came down to the world he took this form, and in this form he was seen by men.

When 'Isa b. Musa, Mansur's general, heard of Abu 'l-Khattab's evil propaganda, he had him put to death in the salt marshes of Kufa. After his death the

Khatabiyya became divided into different sub-sects. One of these held that after Abu 'l-Khattab the imam was a man called Mu'ammār, to whom they gave allegiance as they had done to Abu 'l-Khattab. They believed that the present world would not come to an end, and that the Paradise enjoyed by men consists of pleasant things, luxuries and general well-being. Hell, on the other hand, consists of unpleasant things, hardship and suffering endured by men. They looked upon alcohol, fornication and all other forbidden things as lawful. They believed also in discarding prayer and other religious obligations. This group is called Mu'ammariya.

Another group maintained that after Abu 'l-Khattab the imam was Bazigh. This man held that Ja'far was God, in the sense that God had appeared to men in the form of Ja'far. He also held that every believer receives revelation from God, and he interpreted the words of God: 'No one can believe except by the will of God' (Qur'an, 10:100), as meaning by revelation from God. In a like manner he interpreted the other words of God, 'Your Lord revealed to the bee' (Qur'an, 16:68). He maintained, too, that some of his followers were superior to Gabriel and Michael, and held that of a man who had reached perfection it should not be said that he died; rather, of the one who reached perfection it should be said that he returned to the heavenly world. All of his followers claim to see their dead ones in the morning and in the evening. The group is the Bazighiyya.

Another group held that after Abu 'l-Khattab the imam was 'Umair b. Bayan al-'Ijli. Their beliefs are

the same as those of the first group though they admit that they do die. They set up a tent in Kunasa at Kufa where they all gathered to worship Sadiq. A report on them was brought to Yazid b. 'Umar b. Hubaira who took 'Umair prisoner and crucified him Kunasa at Kufa. This group is called the 'Ijliya, or also the 'Umairiya.

Another group held that after Abu 'l-Khattab the imam was Mufadda al-Sairafi. The members of this sect believed in the Lordship of Ja'far, but not in his prophethood and apostleship. They are known as the Mufaddaliya.

Ja'far b. Muhammad al-Sadiq dissociated himself from all of these sects, rejected them and anathematized them. All of them are confused, misguided and ignorant about the true character of their imams, and utterly lost.<sup>122</sup>

### Aim of Abu al-Khattab: Seeking Leadership

It is clearly observable from the hadith reports that Abu al-Khattab, who had formed his group in Kufa, had the assumption of leadership as his primary objective and in order to attain this goal he would at times go with his group to Medina in order to meet Imam Sadiq (a). In one of his trips, he went with a group of seventy followers to the house of Imam (a) in Medina with the aim of gaining esteem and stature for himself in the eyes of the public. This way, people would consider his statements to be true so as to enable him to fabricate

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<sup>122</sup> *Kitab al-milal wa al-nihal*, pp. 154-5.

hadiths and attribute them to Imam Sadiq (a) such as: "Abu al-Khattab is the treasure of our knowledge and he is the place where all our inner secrets are housed."<sup>123</sup> He pursued his own goals, but Imam Sadiq (a) who was aware of his mission and the views of his group, would provide advice and guidance to him and tried to make him give up his ambition for leadership and said: "Do you want me to tell you what is the criteria of a virtuous and pious Muslim?" They replied, "Yes." He followed up by saying: "Criteria of a virtuous Muslim is reading of the Qur'an and being pious and God-aware and putting forth the efforts to obey God. These are the scale of measurement of the virtuous Muslim. What do you have to do with seeking leadership? Muslims are in need of only one leader. Do not be deceived by the endorsement of various leaders in your favor because they will be the cause of your destruction."<sup>124</sup>

This was the statement of the Imam (a) that was aimed to keep him away from his ambition of leadership but Abu al-Khattab and his followers persisted in their objective of gaining esteemed positions and in order to reach this goal they considered all that was necessary to be lawful, even stealing to support the cost of their mission.

### Fabrication of Hadiths for Political Objectives

Abu al-Khattab and his followers, in order to propagate their doctrine and to give credence to their statements, fabricated many hadith reports and attributed them to Imam Sadiq (a). The essence of all these hadiths was to

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<sup>123</sup> *Rijal al-Kashshi*, 2:579.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:581.

endorse their belief system, i.e. Lordship of Imam Sadiq (a), appointment of Abu al-Khattab as his messenger, making lawful all the sinful acts and eradication of religious obligations.

One of the ways of spreading and propagating these false hadiths was by obtaining the original copies of the works of Imam Sadiq (a)'s companions with the purported aim to copy from them. They would concoct hadith reports and insert them in the newly copied manuscripts that were then spread to various places and, as a result, these false hadiths became distributed amongst the public at large with their attribution to Imam Sadiq (a). In those days, there were no printing presses and the manuscripts used to be written down by copyists and there was hardly any opportunity to compare the copied work with the original in order to verify that there had been no additions or subtractions. People who gained access to these copied manuscripts assumed that all the hadith reports in them were true and in harmony with the hadiths in the original manuscript. Because the group of Abu al-Khattab were well-organized and well-disciplined, they were able to make great strides in fabricating hadiths and spreading them widely. Even after the killing of Abu al-Khattab, his disciples continued to make up hadith reports and would insert them in the works of the companions of Imam Sadiq (a) and this state of affairs continued until the time of Imam Rida (a), i.e. more than fifty years uninterruptedly, for the promotion of the ideology of the group of Abu al-Khattab by exaggerating reports about Imam Sadiq (a).<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 2:490.

Imam Sadiq (a) Denounces the Group of Abu al-Khattab

Mu'awiyah b. Hakim relates from his grandfather, Mu'awiyah b. Ammar: "I had received some hadith reports from Abu al-Khattab that I had difficulty accepting as valid. In my trip to Medina<sup>126</sup> I arrived in the presence of Imam Sadiq (a) and in this session where Abu al-Khattab himself was present, I asked the Imam (a): 'Abu al-Khattab has related that such and such has come from you.' The Imam (a) replied: 'Abu al-Khattab has made up a lie.' I followed up by bringing forth all the other hadith reports that I had heard from Abu al-Khattab in order to ask the Imam (a) of their validity. In the presence of Abu al-Khattab, the Imam (a) dismissed and rejected all these hadiths as having been fabricated. Consequently, Abu al-Khattab was eager to leave this assembly and asked me three times: 'Don't you want to get up and leave with me?' The Imam in each case said to Abu al-Khattab that Ibn Ammar had things to discuss with him. Abu al-Khattab left the session and after that the Imam (a) said: 'The purpose of inviting you to go out was to tell you that I have related the secrets and realities to him (Abu al-Khattab) but when you ask me in public, I discredit these reports in front of you in order to hide this esoteric information from you.' The Imam (a) instructed his disciples to convey this message to his followers regarding hadith reports emanating from Abu al-Khattab. Ibn Ammar responded that he would convey

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<sup>126</sup> Abu al-Khattab was a resident of Kufa but would travel to Medina and meet Imam Sadiq (a) but his activities and central location were in Kufa.



all that he can remember from this session to the Imam's followers."<sup>127</sup>

Imam Sadiq (a) repeatedly and by employing various expressions rejected and dismissed Abu al-Khattab and his group as liars, unbelievers and cursed them and desired that people keep aloof from them. Imam (a) said about him and those people who think on a similar line: "May God curse Abu al-Khattab and his followers who were killed as well as those who are still alive and anyone who has any sympathy and mercy for Abu al-Khattab and his followers."<sup>128</sup> In another report the Imam (a) denounced them as follows: "May God and his angels and all the people bestow their curse upon Abu al-Khattab. I testify that he is an unbeliever, a profligate and a polytheist who will be most severely punished along with Pharaoh."<sup>129</sup>

The Imam advised his followers: "You should not sit down with the group of Abu al-Khattab or eat and drink with them or shake hands with them."<sup>130</sup>

And he said: "...Abu al-Khattab and Yunus b. Zabyan and their followers and the devil that duped them will be subjected to the most severe punishment with Pharaoh and his followers."<sup>131</sup>

"Shall I tell you who the jinn come down to? They come down to every lying sinner who readily lends an ear to

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 2:583.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 2:584.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 2:584-5.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 2:586.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 2:658.

them, and most of them are liars" (Qur'an, 26:221-3) was revealed in reference to people such as Abu al-Khattab, Hamzah b. Ammar Barbari and Mughirah b. Sa'id.<sup>132</sup>

### Abu al-Khattab Preferred over Imam Sadiq (a)!

The followers of Abu al-Khattab widely propagated information regarding the sanctity and the grandeur of their leader and had set him up as an idol such that whatever he said would be accepted unquestioningly and without any hesitation. They gave priority and preference to Abu al-Khattab's statements over those of Imam Sadiq (a). Imam (a) related this situation with a sense of sorrow and grief and said: "I very much regret that people are bringing destruction to themselves by joining the camp of Abu al-Khattab. Musa b. Ashim and Hafs b. Maymun used to come to me and I would relate to them on different matters; however, upon leaving my company they would go and meet Abu al-Khattab who would say things contradictory to what I had said. As a result, they would accept the statements of Abu al-Khattab and reject mine!"<sup>133</sup>

The Imam (a) was deeply regretful of the compound ignorance of the followers of Abu al-Khattab who had become his zealous supporters and had contracted a disease for which there is no cure. Therefore, compassionate guidance offered by Imam Sadiq (a) had no

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 2:577 and 2:591. Hamzah b. Ammar Barbari gave an opinion that all sins are lawful and he himself married his daughter and said: "All sinful acts become lawful (*mubab*) for a person who has attained the cognizance (*ma'rifat*) of the Imam" (*Firaq al-Shi'ah*, p. 222-3).

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 2:634-5.

effect on them but the guidance from Abu al-Khattab was accepted as if it was a revelation!

Compound ignorance had taken such deep roots in the soul of the followers of Abu al-Khattab that when his daughter passed away and was being placed in the grave, Yunus b. Zabyan placed his head into the grave and said: "Peace be upon you the daughter of the messenger of God"<sup>134</sup>

More grievous statements and beliefs than the above are that some of the enthusiastic supporters of Abu al-Khattab viewed him to be superior than the Prophet of Islam (S). For instance, Hasan b. Ali, who was known by the title of Sajjadah said: "Abu al-Khattab is superior to Muhammad b. Abdallah (S) because God censured and chastised the latter in the Qur'an in places such as '[Prophet], the disbelievers planned to tempt you away from what We revealed to you, so that you would invent some other revelation and attribute it to Us. Then they would have taken you as a friend. If We had not made you stand firm, you would almost have inclined a little towards them' (Qur'an, 17:73-4). However, God never made such statements in regards to Abu al-Khattab."<sup>135</sup>

### Example of a Fabricated Hadith

The group of Abu al-Khattab was forced to put a religious coloring on their claims to gain acceptance from the public because they were operating in a Muslim atmosphere. One of the claims of this group was that *salat* (ritual prayers), *zakat* (obligatory tax on wealth) and

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 2:658.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 2:819.

*hajj* (pilgrimage) and similar terms that are mentioned in the Qur'an are in actuality referring to eminent and saintly figures. The people are obligated to know them well and accept their guardianship over them. Upon attaining cognizance of these saintly figures, they would be exempt from all religious obligations and no matter what act is performed, even if it is adultery, it would be viewed as permissible! In addition, words such *fahsha'* (unlawful sexual relations), *munkar* (universally recognized as immoral and unethical), *baghi* (rebel), *khamr* (intoxicant), *maysar* (gambling) and such other negative terms refer to sinful people that everyone is directed to keep aloof from and to separate from them. The Abu al-Khattab group invented hadiths in order to validate their claims and attributed them to the Imams (a) so that the ordinary people would accept the material as being part of religion.

The following hadith is most likely one of the hadiths that has been concocted:

Dawud b. Kathir said: "I asked Imam Sadiq (a): 'Do *salat*, *zakat* and *hajj* that are to be found in the Qur'an refer to you?' The Imam (a) replied: 'O Dawood, we are the *salat* in the Qur'an and we are the *zakat* and we are *sawm* and we are *hajj*.... and we are the *ka'bah* of God and we are the direction towards the face of God such that wherever you turn, you will see the face of God....And our enemies in the Qur'an have been given terms such as *fahsha'* (unlawful sexual relations), *munkar* (universally recognized as immoral and unethical), *baghi* (rebel),

*khamr* (intoxicant), *maysar* and *qimar* (gambling), *maytah* (carion), *dam* (blood) and pig's meat."<sup>136</sup>

If we are to accept the assessment of Najashi and other eminent scholars of hadith regarding the probity of Dawud b. Kathir, then we would come to the conclusion that he is a highly unreliable narrator of hadith and the extremists used to narrate hadiths on his authority. Consequently, these types of hadiths are not to be trusted.<sup>137</sup> Further, there is another point worthy of note: that the extremists counted Dawud b. Kathir as one who belonged to their group and attributed to him reports that are sinful and exaggerated.<sup>138</sup> The experts of hadiths have differing views on the integrity of Dawud b. Kathir; however, there is no disagreement on the statement made by Kashshi that "the extremists counted him as one of the pillars of their group and attributed to him hadiths that are exaggerated." Accordingly, the preceding hadiths had in all probability been fabricated and attributed to Dawud b. Kathir. The followers of Abu al-Khattab were among the extremists who invented hadiths and inserted them into the manuscripts of the companions of Imam Sadiq (a).<sup>139</sup>

The content of the aforementioned hadith is in harmony with the worldview of the followers of Abu al-Khattab who would say that the sinful acts are lawful and the obligatory religious obligations have been lifted.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 2:577 and *Bihar al-anwar*, 24:303.

<sup>137</sup> Ahmad b. Ali al-Najashi, *Rijal al-Najashi*, ed. Sayyid Musa al-Shubayri al-Zanjani (Qum: Mu'assasat al-nashr al-Islami, 1985), p. 156.

<sup>138</sup> *Rijal al-Kashshi*, 2:690.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 2:490.

Therefore, it is acceptable to conjecture that this hadith has been fabricated by the followers of Abu al-Khattab and interpolated into the works of the companions of Imam Sadiq (a).

It is possible that the some may initially view these kinds of hadiths to be counted as part of the virtues of the Imams (a) and censure of their enemies. However, it must be noted that the Qur'an is not a book of riddles for it to employ words such as *salat*, *zakat*, and *siyam* to refer to eminent and saintly figures or to use terms such as *fahsha'*, *munkar*, *baghi*, *khamr* and *mitah* to refer to the enemies of God because the Qur'an was revealed in a plain Arabic language so that the people can understand the contents. There is also a hadith in which some people related to Imam Sadiq (a): "There are hadith reports in which the Qur'anic terms such as *khamr*, *maysar*, *ansab* (idolatrous practices) and *azlam* (divining with arrows) are references to particular people." The Imam said: "It was not the case and further it is not the custom of God to speak with his creatures by the use of words and address them in a manner such that they would not comprehend or understand."<sup>140</sup>

### Imam Hadi (a) and the Followers of Abu al-Khattab

The thoughts and ideas of Abu al-Khattab regarding *salat*, *sawm* and other such terms that are mentioned in the Qur'an were still present till the time of Imam Hadi (a) and were propagated widely. Ibrahim b. Shaybah, a disciple of Imam Hadi (a), said: "I wrote to the Imam (a): 'May my life be sacrificed for you. There is a group in

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<sup>140</sup> *Bihar al-anwar*, 24:300.

our vicinity who related hadiths in praise of you but we are unable to accept them as valid because our hearts detest those things that are mentioned in such reports. At the same time, we are unable to reject them because whatever is narrated by them as hadiths have been attributed to your forefathers. They say: "The term *salat* that is mentioned in the Qur'an refers to a specific person and not to the ritual that includes genuflection (*ruku'*) and prostration (*sujud*), and also *zakat* refers to a person and not to the alms-tax on the wealth. Likewise, sinful acts that are to be found in the Qur'an refer to special people." Those who relate these hadith reports claim that they are from amongst the lovers and friends of the Imams (a). They invite the ordinary people to follow them and their ideas. One of them who belongs to this group is Ali b. Hasakah and another one is Qasim Yaqtini. If you deem it proper, oblige your devotee with a response and clarification on this matter.' Imam (a) in his response wrote: "That which has been written (in your letter) does not belong to our religion and keep away from it."<sup>141</sup>

From the above hadith, it becomes apparent that those who invented such reports intended to attract the followers and lovers of the Imams (a) and lead them astray by injecting their own ideas onto them and to say: "If you attain full cognizance (*ma'rifat*) of the Imams (a) and dissociate from their enemies then there are no longer any religious obligations on you and all that has been mentioned in the Qur'an as sinful would become lawful for you. In this manner, they expanded the

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 25:315 and *Rijal al-Kashshi*, 2:577.

number of people seeking worldly pleasures and committing acts of debauchery.

Extremism: The Fundamental Pivot in the Thought of Abu al-Khattab

Abu al-Khattab elevated the status of the Imams (a) to divinity so that he could claim the role of a messenger and find acceptance of that claim by the public; thus the fundamental pivot of his thought was exaggeration regarding the Imams (a). However, he first exaggerated about himself and then proceeded to elevate the Imams (a) to Lordship with the aim of exploiting the love that the people had for the Imams (a). In order to dupe the people with skill and efficiency, they resorted to the Qur'an by reconciling the verses of the Qur'an to their own false thoughts. Habib Kath'ami said: "I talked about the thoughts of Abu al-Khattab in the company of Imam Sadiq (a). The Imam (a) asked me to provide further elaboration about Abu al-Khattab. I said: 'He interprets the following verse of the Qur'an: "The hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter shrink with aversion whenever God (Allah) is mentioned on His own, but they rejoice when gods other than He (*"alladhina min duni-hi"*) are mentioned" (Qur'an: 39:45) in such a way that the word Allah (God) is in reference to Imam Ali (a) and the phrase "*alladhina min duni-hi* (other than He)" refers to so and so.' Imam Sadiq (a) repeated three times that whoever says these kinds of things is a polytheist and again repeated three times that the statements of Abu al-Khattab are false and God by the use of the word "Allah" refers to Himself."<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> *Bihar al-anwar*, 24:302.



It is clear that Abu al-Khattab was a shrewd man who had a good understanding of the temperament and the nature of those who loved the Imams (a). Keeping this in mind, he applied the term "Allah" to Imam Ali (a). Likewise, in keeping with the enmity and hatred that the Imam's followers harbored with regard to the caliphs, he applied the Qur'anic phrase "*alladhina min duni-hi* (other than He)" to the caliphs. In this manner, he desired to exploit, to the maximum, the positive sentiments of the people regarding the Imams (a) and at the same time exploit the negative sentiments of the people regarding the caliphs so that the public could be duped more easily and he attain his goal more quickly.

#### Fabricating Hadiths for Material Benefits

It is evident from the historical reports and the hadiths that there was a group of people who would invent hadiths in order to attract towards them the lovers of the Imams (a) and enable them to obtain larger monetary benefit by way of exploitation. It is natural that, the more you exaggerate and praise the one who is the object of love and admiration, the greater will be the affinity of his followers towards you, resulting in a closer bond with you. Certainly these converts would render greater help and assistance to you on account of the exaggerated virtues of the Imams (a). A group from the followers of Abu al-Khattab, in the name of being ardent "partisans" or "admirers" of the Imams (a), fabricated exaggerated reports about them so that they could attract more supporters of the Imams (a) who were superficial and shallow, lacking any hidden motives. In this way, the disciples of Abu al-Khattab were able to strengthen their

own status in the society and obtain larger sums of money from these naïve lovers of the Imams (a).

Ali b. Mahziyar said: "We were in the company of Imam Muhammad Taqi (a) that the name of Abu al-Khattab came up in the discussion. Imam (a) said: 'May God curse Abu al-Khattab and his companions and those who doubt on sending curses on him and those who restrain from sending curses on him.' He continued: 'At present, Abu al-Ghamar and Ja'far b. Waqid and Hashim b. Abi Hashim are the ones who integrate themselves amongst the people and take advantage of our honorable status amongst them by way of claiming to be our supporters in order to attract the attention of the people. They invite them to the path of Abu al-Khattab so that they can secure for themselves material gain and benefit in their daily lives. May God curse Abu al-Khattab and these three people who invite people to their path and may God curse those who accept these false statements from them. O Ali b. Mahziyar do not restrain yourself from cursing them because God has cursed them. The Prophet (S) has said: "The curse of God will be upon one who restrains himself from cursing someone that God has already cursed."'"<sup>143</sup>

Take note of the following points:

1. The beliefs and thoughts of the group of Abu al-Khattab, which were based on exaggeration of the virtues of the Imams (a), was so prevalent and gaining new converts at the time of the ninth Imam (a) that he regarded it his duty and

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<sup>143</sup> *Rijal al-Kashshi*, 2:811.

obligation to confront this deviant belief system and categorically convey his position vis a vis Abu al-Khattab and his followers to Ali b. Mahziyar.

2. The polytheistic thoughts of Abu al-Khattab were primarily spread by his followers amongst those who were the followers of the Imams (a) because the former presented themselves as ardent lovers of the Imams (a) in order to pave the way for them to exploit the love and reverence that the ordinary followers had of the Imams (a). They elevated the status of the Imams (a) to Godhood and injected in the minds of converts extremist thoughts which were the foundation of their goals and objectives.
3. The vehement objection of the Imam (a) regarding Abu al-Khattab and his followers and the insistence on cursing them were because they elevated Imam Ali (a) and the other Imams (a) to Godhood and desired to infuse this into the hearts of the public. This view is diametrically opposed to the most basic and fundamental principle of monotheism (*tawhid*). The invitation made by all the prophets was based on *tawhid* and the Prophet's (S) first word of invitation to the faith was *tawhid*. Thus, it is natural that the Imam would get very upset with the approach of Abu al-Khattab and confront him on that which was fundamentally based on the lordship of the Imams (a). It has been reported in hadiths that

Imam Sadiq (a) regarded Abu al-Khattab as a polytheist.<sup>144</sup>

### Invisible Oppression against Imam Sadiq (a)

The pleasure-seeking group and followers of Abu al-Khattab regarded Imam Sadiq (a) as God so that they could establish the prophethood of their own leader. By the use of this strategy, they were able to establish a new code of law that would abandon things that were obligatory and allow them to be completely absorbed into commission of acts of debauchery. These were the cause of great harm to the prestige of Imam Sadiq (a). The attribution of Godhood to Imam Sadiq (a) and abandonment of obligatory acts and commission of sinful acts in the Muslim society is viewed as loathsome and intolerable by ordinary Muslims. Without doubt, a substantial portion of Muslims who are unable to analyze societal issues with meticulousness and are prone to provide their own analysis of the situation, when they see that those who claim to be ardent lovers of Imam Sadiq (a) are simultaneously absorbed in the commission of sins and do not pray—this would generate in their hearts cynicism regarding Imam Sadiq (a) and make them keep aloof from him.

Even though Imam Sadiq (a) repeatedly and emphatically cursed and rejected Abu al-Khattab and his followers, this could not take away the pessimism and cynicism that was created by this group. The message of the Imam (a) did not reach everyone because the instruments of propagation necessary to remove these negative opinions from the public sphere were not available. Thus, it was to

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 2:585.

be expected that a group of unaware Muslims would continue to harbor bad feelings regarding the Imams (a) and this is the indirect and invisible oppression that was committed by Abu al-Khattab and his followers.

Kashshi in his book on *rijal* relates an interesting story:

Yahya b. Abd al-Hamid Hamani in his book on confirming the succession of Imam Ali (a) writes:

I said to Sharik "that there is a group of people who believe that Ja'far b. Muhammad (a) is weak in narrating hadiths and one should not rely upon him." He responded: "Let me inform you of the real situation. Ja'far b. Muhammad (a) was a righteous and an eminent person who was chaste and God-conscious. However, there was an ignorant group that surrounded him and regularly went to see him. Upon leaving the assembly, they would claim that Ja'far b. Muhammad (a) had said such and such and attribute to him hadith reports that were all immoral, sinful and false. Their goal was to relate these kinds of false hadith reports to people who revered Ja'far b. Muhammad (a) in order to gain money and material benefit from them to defray their daily expenses. Some of the people believed in these false reports and were subsequently led astray and perished. Others rejected these hadith reports. Those who fabricated hadith reports and attributed them to Ja'far b. Muhammad (a) were individuals such as Mufaddal b. Umar, Banan b. Sam'an Nahdi and Amaru Nabti who said: 'Anyone who attains full knowledge of the Imam (a) is exempt from prayers and fasting,' and other hadiths such as Ali (a) flies with the wind on the clouds' and others

report that Ali after his death made statements and spoke; while giving him a ghusl his body moved; and the Imam (a) is the Lord of the heavens and the earth.

These misguided ignorant people had set up a partner with God. By God, Ja'far b. Muhammad (a) never said any one of these false reports. Ja'far (a) was far too pious and chaste to make such remarks. People heard these statements from these dishonest persons and attributed them to Ja'far b. Muhammad (a). As a result, the ordinary public became cynical regarding the Imam (a) and said: 'He is weak in the matter of narrating hadith reports and is not worthy of acceptance.' If you had seen Ja'far b. Muhammad (a) you would have realized that he was a unique and an exemplary person."<sup>145</sup>

We can deduce several beneficial points from this anecdote:

1. The pleasure-seekers fabricated hadith reports under the rubric of the virtues of the Imams (a) and said that whosoever attains cognizance of the Imam (a), he/she becomes exempt from the performance of prayers, fasting and other obligatory injunctions and further, commission of those acts that are regarded sinful become lawful for him/her. The same understanding is taken from their claim that *salat*, *sawm*, *hajj* and other obligatory acts that have been mentioned in the Qur'an refer to eminent and exemplary persons whose cognizance one should attempt to obtain. Likewise, adultery (*zina*),

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<sup>145</sup> *Rijal al-Kashshi*, 2:615-16.

gambling (*qimar*) and other sinful acts refer to immoral persons that one should detest and keep away from.

2. Extremism with regard to praising the Imams (a) and affirmation of their Lordship were means of gaining greater attraction from the friends and followers of the Ahl al-bayt and a way of obtaining larger material benefits from them. It is natural that the more you exaggerate and praise the one who is the object of your love and admiration, the greater will be the affinity towards you, resulting in a closer bond with you. Consequently, such people will certainly render greater help and assistance to you.
3. The exaggerated praises of the Imams (a) that were attributed to Imam Sadiq (a) and the assertions that religious obligations like prayers have been waived along with permission to commit sinful acts had a negative and harmful effect on the rank and prestige of Imam Sadiq (a) in the Muslim society. As a result, many Muslims who were lacking in depth and good understanding dissociated from the Imam (a) to such an extent that the hadith collectors viewed the Imam (a) as an unreliable and untrustworthy narrator of the hadiths! From this, it becomes evident that in the eighth century of the common era a poisonous and non-conducive atmosphere had been created with regard to the status of Imam Sadiq (a). Thus, it shows the reason why Muhammad b. Isma'il Bukhari, who traveled to far-away places such as Balkh, Baghdad, Basra, Kufa, Damascus and Asqalan in order to gather hadith reports, did not

relate even one hadith in his *Sahih Bukhari* on the authority of Imam Sadiq (a)?!<sup>146</sup>

### Devastating Effect of Fabricating Hadiths

As mentioned earlier, Abu al-Khattab and his followers customarily inserted false hadiths in the manuscripts they obtained from the close disciples of the Imams (a) and subsequently made by hand multiple copies and distributed them widely in the Muslim world. The interpolation was done with such skill and aptitude that it was difficult, even for the learned, to distinguish the true from the false hadith reports. In order to get a sense of the magnitude of the devastating effect of this and the shrewdness of the followers of Abu al-Khattab, the following hadith is instructive:

Yunus b. Abd al-Rahman, a jurist and a devoted follower of Imam Rida (a), said: "I traveled to Iraq and found a few followers of Imam Baqir (a) and a larger group of followers of Imam Sadiq (a). For a while, I heard hadith reports from them and recorded them and also obtained their manuscripts on hadiths and copied them for myself. When I returned back from Iraq, I had the good fortune of meeting Imam Rida (a) and in this session I presented to the Imam (a) all the hadith reports that I had gathered from Iraq and I requested him to check them for authenticity. I requested that he inform me of any discrepancy and if any of them are unreliable. The Imam (a) accepted to undertake this task and returned the hadiths back to me after going through them carefully. The outcome of the Imam's study of the

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<sup>146</sup> *al-Imam al-Sadiq*, 1:80.



hadiths was that a major portion of those that were attributed to Imam Sadiq (a) were false and fabricated. The Imam (a) said: 'These hadiths are not from Imam Sadiq (a) and without a doubt these false reports have been imposed on Imam Sadiq (a) by Abu al-Khattab. May God curse Abu al-Khattab that till today in the works of the companions of Imam Sadiq (a), the followers of Abu al-Khattab who are shrewd and deceptive are able to insert false hadith reports into these manuscripts. You should not accept any hadith that is attributed to us if it is in conflict with the Qur'an because whatever we say is in harmony with the Qur'an and the *sunnah* of the Prophet (a) as we narrate hadith reports from God and His messenger.'"<sup>147</sup>

Please take note of the following points that pertain to the above anecdote:

1. The followers of Abu al-Khattab were so successful and shrewd in inserting false hadiths that were attributed to Imam Sadiq (a) into the manuscripts of the companions of Imam (a) that even intelligent jurists (*faqih*) such as Yunus b. Abd al-Rahman, who was one of the closest companions of the Imams, (a) was not able to determine that many of these hadiths were forged!
2. In the opinion of Abd al-Rahman, the narrators of the hadiths in the chain of transmission (*isnad*) were reliable and worthy of acceptance. That is, these false hadiths had been appended

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<sup>147</sup> *Rijal al-Kashshi*, 2:489-90, hadith no. 401.

with a *isnad* comprising people like Zurarah and Muhammad b. Muslim and Fudayl b. Yassar who were some of the most trustworthy and truthful companions of Imam Sadiq (a). If the hadiths had been appended with unreliable chains of transmitters then Yunus b. Abd al-Rahman would never have copied these hadith reports. So, apparently, the chains of transmission of the fabricated hadiths were reliable and trustworthy.

3. The manuscripts of the companions of Imam Sadiq (a), which was the source of hadiths for Yunus b. Abd al-Rahman and contained many false hadiths, are part of the 400 books (no longer extant) which were gradually composed by the companions of the Imams (a). The earliest Shi'i hadith works compiled such as *al-Kafi*, *Man la yahduruh al-faqih*, *Tahdhib* and *Istibsar* are based on the 400 books that contained fabricated hadith reports. These 400 books were also the source of all future hadith collections. As a result, religious scholars subject these four books to scrutiny from the perspective of chains of transmission (*isnad*) and text (*matn*) and do not regard them as authoritative and beyond reproach.
4. Many of the companions of Imam Sadiq (a), whose manuscripts were used by people like Yunus b. Abd al-Rahman to record his own collection, used to live in Iraq but were unaware that the copied manuscripts that were in their possession contained fabricated hadith reports. In that era, there was no printing press and

therefore all the manuscripts were not identical or foolproof as errors did creep in. The original manuscript that was used by the followers of Abu al-Khattab as a starting point for inserting false hadiths was not accessible to many of the future hadith collectors like Yunus b. Abd al-Rahman to be able to compare and figure out which of the hadiths had been interpolated in the copied manuscripts. Consequently, some of the works of the hadith that were compiled by the very companions of Imam Sadiq (a) contained forged hadiths because they were based on distorted manuscripts; however, they were not aware of this situation.

5. During the thirty-five years of the imamate of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a), his companions were unaware that many of the hadith reports contained in the manuscripts of the companions of Imam Sadiq (a) contained forged hadiths. Or, if they knew, the thought had not come to their mind to present all these hadith reports to the seventh Imam (a) so that he could separate the true from the false hadith reports. Even if this thought had come to them to present all the hadiths to the Imam (a) for verification, it would not have been feasible to do so because it was not humanly possible to gather all the hadith collections. The manuscripts had been spread out in various cities and the companions of the Imam did not know the locations of the manuscripts or the persons in possession of these works. In addition, the followers of Abu al-Khattab, after the latter's death, were present and

active during the time of Imam Rida (a) and also after him, and continued to fabricate hadith reports and insert them into the manuscripts that were attributed to the companions of Imam Sadiq (a). The followers of Abu al-Khattab were careful in choosing persons to whom they would give these interpolated manuscripts. Even if we were to assume that some of these manuscripts that contained false hadith reports were brought to the Imam (a) to distinguish the genuine from the forged hadiths, it would still not have been possible to eliminate all the concocted hadiths because the group of Abu al-Khattab was actively pursuing the enterprise of forging hadith reports. This was the situation then and the affliction continues to the present time with the same problems when it comes to the verification of hadith reports.

6. The fabrication of false hadith reports was not limited to the followers of Abu al-Khattab; rather, even before Abu al-Khattab, persons like Mughirah b. Sa'id and his followers secretly forged hadiths and inserted them into the manuscripts of the companions of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a).<sup>148</sup> After Abu al-Khattab, there were unscrupulous persons such as Muhammad b. Ali Sayrafi who was known as Abu Saminah. He used to fabricate hadith reports and enter them into works of hadiths. The scholars have said that this Abu Saminah was an extremist and a liar because he had

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 490-2.

manufactured so many hadiths in his place of residence in Kufa that he became known as a liar and a person lacking in integrity. Thereafter, he came to Qum and entered into companionship with Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Isa who was an eminent and distinguished hadith scholar (*muhaddith*) in Qum. After some time, Abu Saminah became an extremist and lived a life of secrecy which resulted in his expulsion from Qum by this same eminent hadith scholar.<sup>149</sup> It was quite easy for Abu Saminah to insert false hadiths because he was himself the author of a few books.<sup>150</sup>

7. In those days, it was not customary to verify whether the copied manuscript was in complete agreement with the original manuscript. Instead,

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<sup>149</sup> Qahba'i, Inayat Allah b. Ali *Majma' al-rijal*, 7 vols. (Qum: Mu'assasat al-Isma'iliyyin, nd), 5:265.

<sup>150</sup> Najashi, p. 187. Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Barqi records 190 hadiths in his work titled *Mahasin* on the authority of Muhammad b. Ali Abu Saminah. A number of hadiths that Barqi recorded from Abu Saminah without any intermediaries are as follows:

1. "When the people of Lut performed the indecent acts, the earth cried so intensely that the tears piled up all the way to the sky. And, the sky cried so profusely that its tears reached the height of the Throne" (*Mahasin*, p. 110, hadith 102).
2. "The Prophet (S) said: 'In the congregational prayers, make sure that the lines are straight and you are standing shoulder to shoulder so that I can see you from the back of my head'!" (*Mahasin*, p. 80, hadith no. 7).
3. "Do not clean all the meat from the bones because this is the share of the jinn. If you were to do this you will lose something precious from your home!" (*Mahasin*, p. 472, hadith no. 466).

the fact that the name of the author was placed on the manuscript was taken as sufficient proof that it had been authored by him. This was the same case with Yunus b. Abd al-Rahman, even though he was a meticulous jurist, when he went to Iraq and began to copy the hadiths from the manuscripts attributed to the companions of Imam Sadiq (a). He did not ask the following questions: Has this manuscript been compared for verification with the original manuscript? Is the signature of the original author present in the copied manuscripts? Thus, the four major works of hadith in Shi'i Islam, i.e. *al-Kafi*, *Man la yahduruh al-faqih*, *Tahdhib*, and *Istibsar*, have been contaminated with false hadith reports because they relied upon the 400 works that had most likely been copies of the original in which the false hadiths had been inserted. We know for certainty that there were forged hadiths in the collection of Yunus b. Abd al-Rahman that relied upon the copied manuscripts containing hadiths attributed to Imam Sadiq (a). Likewise, we find fabricated hadiths in the collection of Kulayni in *al-Kafi* such as "The Qur'an that was revealed upon Prophet Muhammad (S) by the agency of Gabriel comprised of seventeen thousand verses."<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Muhammad b. Ya'qub b. Ishaq al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, edited by Ali Akbar Ghaffari, 8 volumes (Tehran: Dar al-kutub al-Islamiyyah, 1968), 2:634, hadith no. 28 {*Fadl al-Qur'an—Bab al-nawadir*}: "Inna al-Qur'an ja'a bi-hi Jibra'il (a) ila Muhammad (S) sab'ah ashar alf ayah."

The actual numbers of verses in the Qur'an add up to about 6,236. See footnote no. 2 in the concise but useful booklet authored by

8. We know from the anecdote of Yunus b. Abd al-Rahman that those who forged the hadiths also forged sound chains of transmission (*isnad*). Therefore, a reliable *isnad* does not prove that the text of the hadith is true. One of the hadiths that Kulayni records in *al-Kafi* is probably of this type. The hadith reads: Imam Sadiq said that "The Qur'an that was revealed upon Prophet Muhammad (S) by the agency of Gabriel comprised seventeen thousand verses."<sup>152</sup> We all know that the present-day Qur'an contains some 6,236 verses whereas this hadith claims that the original Qur'an comprised seventeen thousand verses. Therefore, about two-thirds of the Qur'an has been lost! This hadith was taken by Kulayni from the work of Ali b. Hakam. The chain of transmission is apparently sound and reliable but is it possible to believe that this hadith has truly come from Imam Sadiq (a) or would it be more reasonable to say that this hadith was one of the forged hadiths taken from the interpolated manuscripts? Ali b. Hakam was a blind man who had heard hadiths from many people and had preserved them to his memory. Of course, he would have people write for him these hadith reports because he himself was blind.<sup>153</sup> After

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Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, *The Qur'an: Its Protection from Alteration* (Toronto: Ahlul Bayt Assembly of North America, 1994), p. 26. He writes: "Those who do not take the trouble of counting go on writing that there are 6,666 verses in the Qur'an. It is one more example of Muslim's tragic carelessness towards the Qur'an."

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Ahmad b. Ali al-Najashi, *Rijal al-Najashi*, ed. Muhammad Jawad al-Na'ini, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dar al-adwa', 1988), 2:109.

some time, a book by the name of *Ali b. Hakam* was composed that consisted of all the hadiths supposedly received from him and this book was copied multiple times, giving the fabricators of hadith ample opportunities to insert forged hadiths into this work. One of the copies of this work reaches Kulayni and he records a hadith in his own work of *al-Kafi* from the copied manuscript of Ali b. Hakam.

This hadith that Kulayni has recorded is similar to what is found in the Sunni works received from Ali b. Ka'b who relates: "Chapter 33 (The Joint Forces—Ahzab) which in the present Qur'an consists of seventy-three verses was in actuality the size of Chapter 2 (The Cow—Baqarah)."<sup>154</sup> Chapter 2 (Baqarah) consists of 286 verses or, in other words, four times the size of Chapter 33 (Ahzab) and accordingly, based on this hadith report, only one-fourth of the sura is left intact and the rest has been lost. These kinds of hadiths that pertain to the substantial loss of the original Qur'an have been mentioned in many Sunni sources. For example, Abdallah b. Umar relates that: "no one from amongst you should claim that I have studied the entire Qur'an because no one has information about the whole Qur'an since a substantial portion of the Qur'an has been lost."<sup>155</sup>

There is a strong likelihood that the enemies of Islam fabricated these kinds of reports in order to shed doubt

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<sup>154</sup> Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, *al-Durr al-manthur*, 6 vols. (Beirut: Dar al-ma'rifah, 1945), 5:179.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:179-81.



on the authenticity of the Qur'an. Whereas, in the Qur'an it has been said: "We have sent down the Qur'an Ourself, and We Ourselves will guard it" (Qur'an, 15:9). How is it possible for two-thirds of the Qur'an to be lost when God has guaranteed its preservation from any loss and distortion?! Accordingly, that which Kulayni has recorded from Ali b. Hakam is not reliable at all.

### Killing of Abu al-Khattab and his Followers

The group of Abu al-Khattab, a close-knit and disciplined group, was successful to an extent in its mission. This was partly because the lifting of the religious obligations and making lawful the commission of sins had attracted a significant number of people towards them on account of the animalistic desires that reside in human beings. This group of Abu al-Khattab used to secretly invite people to their path and every leader and preacher from the group would set himself up next to one of the pillars of the mosque of Kufa. He would attempt to attract people and invite them to accept the prophethood of Abu al-Khattab. The mission of this group was so successful that even caliph Mansur Dawaniqi felt threatened by them. As a result, Isa b Musa, nephew of Mansur Dawaniqi, who was the commander in chief of Kufa, resolved to eliminate the sedition created by Abu al-Khattab. When the latter realized this, his group resolved to confront the army of the caliph. Isa b. Musa had prepared an armed cavalry and foot soldiers to apprehend Abu al-Khattab and his followers and bring them to him. However, Abu al-Khattab and seventy of his distinguished disciples who had resolved to confront the government were not prepared to surrender and began to fight with amateur

weapons such as knives, rocks and canes. Abu al-Khattab was the commander of his group and divided his people in sets of ten and gave them words of admonition: "Fight against the army of the government and be sure that you will be successful because the weapons of our opponents will not be able to penetrate your body but your canes will have the same impact on them as spears." He sent out ten people at a time to engage in this confrontation with the forces of the government until thirty of his soldiers were killed. Upon this, Abu al-Khattab's camp protested: "Our master, you can see that our canes have not functioned as spears on our enemies whereas the weapons of our enemies have worked on us which has resulted in the death of some of our comrades!" One of the reports says that he responded by saying: "This is a test and you have been directed to be killed and attain martyrdom. Thus, in order to defend your religion and your honor, you should continue fighting and do not surrender or accept humiliation. Know that even if you surrender, they will kill you. Fight and die with dignity and honor."

These people, in accordance with the instruction of Abu al-Khattab, fought against the opponent's army to the last person with the exception of one by the name of Salim b. Mukarram Abu Khadijah who was wounded and lay amongst those who had died but was assumed to have died. He took flight at night and Abu al-Khattab himself was arrested and taken to Isa b. Musa who gave a command that he be decapitated next to the Euphrates. The head of Abu al-Khattab and seventy of his disciples were sent to Baghdad to Mansur Dawaniqi and their heads and bodies were displayed for three days for public and then ultimately burnt.

One of the strange and bizarre phenomena was that after the killing of Abu al-Khattab and seventy of his prominent disciples, a group of his followers said: "Neither Abu al-Khattab nor his disciples were killed. Rather, an ambiguous command was circulated in the government's camp as a result of which they killed each other while imagining that they were killing Abu al-Khattab and his disciples. The former who had been appointed as the messenger of God by Imam Sadiq (a) was transformed into an angel as a result of this incident and his followers labeled this as the concealment (*ghaybah*) of Abu al-Khattab."<sup>156</sup>

### Sedition of Abu al-Khattab Endures Time

Even though Abu al-Khattab and many of his disciples and propagators were killed, his worldview and the strife that he had generated did not die away. Rather, the followers of his path continued to disseminate his ideas and in fact did so with greater intensity to allow them to continue on their misguided path of commission of sins. An example of such a person is Muhammad b. Furat who was a wine-drinker, extremist and did not offer prayers.<sup>157</sup> He lived in the time of Imam Rida (a) and confronted him with ferocity and mercilessness because he viewed the Imam (a) as an impediment to the progress of his false ideas. Imam Rida (a) said about him: "No one from the followers of Abu al-Khattab has made up lies against us as much as Muhammad b. Furat. The harm and torment that he has inflicted on me is even greater than

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<sup>156</sup> *al-Maqalat wa al-firaq*, pp. 81-3.

<sup>157</sup> *Rijal al-Kashshi*, 2:829.

what Abu al-Khattab (may God's curse be upon him) had inflicted on Imam Sadiq (a)."<sup>158</sup>

From this, it is evident that all the followers used to impute lies against Imam Rida (a) but Muhammad b. Furat did more so than anyone else. Imam Rida (a) said to one of his loyal followers by the name of Yunus b. Abd al-Rahman: "O Yunus, don't you see the extent to which Muhammd b. Furat imputes lies against me?" Yunus replied: "May God keep him far away from His Blessings." Imam (a) said: "God has already kept him away from His Blessings and made him taste the heat of the fire at the time of death but I am saying this so that you can admonish my followers to keep away from him and invite them to send curses upon him and develop a distaste for him so that they will not be attracted to his path"<sup>159</sup> From this statement of the Imam Rida(a), it shows that in his time followers of Abu al-Khattab were still present and active even after the death of Muhammad b. Furat which was fifty years after the death of Abu al-Khattab.

It has been reported that Abu al-Khattab said: "I saw Ja'far b. Muhammd (a) sitting in the place reserved for Isma'il and I told him: 'Show me the proof of your grandeur and your kingdom.' Imam Sadiq (a) asked me in astonishment: 'But don't you already have faith in it?' I said: 'Yes, of course, but I want my heart to feel content.' Thereafter, the Imam (a) spread his arms on the ground and I saw that the skies and the earth and all the other creation were under his command. He asked me:

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 2:827.

'Do you know where the black stone (*al-hajar al-aswad*) is situated?' I looked around and saw that the Imam (a) had lifted the Ka'bah up in the air with his finger. The crowd around him consisted of monkeys and pigs and there was a pond of something that looked like oil in the place where Ka'bah was located. The Imam (a) said: 'This is the center of Satan and place of refuge of *Iblis*.'"<sup>160</sup> This hadith was forged by Abu al-Khattab in order to place himself in the place of Prophet Abraham (a) and Imam Sadiq (a) as God! That which is central to Abu al-Khattab is his own prophethood and the divinity of Imam Sadiq (a) as a way of reaching his goal so that people would accept his claim and he could advance his mission. It is also possible that Abu al-Khattab desired to mock the Ka'bah and the rituals of pilgrimage because the followers of Abu al-Khattab regarded Hajj and other obligatory acts as having been abrogated. What is the meaning of Abu al-Khattab's statement that the Ka'bah is the center of Satan and the refuge of *Iblis* and that a crowd of monkeys and pigs were circumambulating the Ka'bah? This is undoubtedly a direct insult to the Ka'bah and its rituals!

### Sedition of Mughirah b. Sa'id

Before Abu al-Khattab, a person by the name of Mughirah b. Sa'id and his group used to fabricate hadith reports and insert them into the books of the companions of Imam Baqir (a). Mughirah had learnt about magic and sorcery and was thinking of the possibility of organizing a disciplined group by way of devising a new ideology so that he could attain material

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<sup>160</sup> *al-Maqalat wa al-firaq*, p. 55.

benefits from this enterprise.<sup>161</sup> To achieve this objective, he began by exaggerating reports regarding Imam Ali (a) in order to attract the supporters of the Imam (a) and advance his own ideology.<sup>162</sup> He had proposed to Imam Baqir (a) to accept his extremist views and in return he would support him and make it possible for the Imam (a) to rule over Iraq; however, the Imam (a) rejected this proposal offhand.<sup>163</sup> As a result, Mughirah decided to support the imamate of Muhammad b. Abdallah b. al-Hasan known as Nafs Zakiyyah who in the time of the caliph Mansur Dawanqi had risen up to set up a government but failed in his attempt. Mughirah would say that the promised Mahdi that the Prophet (S) had given glad tidings about is the same as this Muhammad b. Abdallah b. al-Hasan who had been designated by Imam Zayn al-Abidin (a) as his successor. The Prophet (S) had said regarding the Mahdi: "The Mahdi will have the same name as me and the name of his father will be the same as my father."<sup>164</sup> Because the name of the father of Nafs al-Zakiyyah was Abdallah, the latter part of this hadith that mentions the name of the father was forged and attributed to the Prophet (S) in order to lay claim on being the Mahdi.

Mughirah was able to use his skills in magic and sorcery and attributed hadiths to the Prophet (S). By portraying himself as a supporter of the Ahl al-Bayt, he was able to dupe a large number of people in Kufa and set up a close-knit and strong group. He would say that Nafs al-

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<sup>161</sup> *Rijal al-Kashshi*, 2:491.

<sup>162</sup> Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 8:121.

<sup>163</sup> Ibn Kathir, 5:208.

<sup>164</sup> *al-Maqalat wa al-firaq*, p. 76.

Zakiyyah had given consent and issued a legal ruling to suffocate or poison their opponents. Thus, it became easy for his supporters to smother or poison their opponents without feeling any sense of guilt. Mughirah, in order to generate terror and fear amongst the public gave instruction to his supporters to kill even those about whose loyalty they had doubts who were residing in Kufa and also in the nearby vicinity to deny them a safe and secure haven in either of these places. Some of his supporters were troubled with this policy of Mughirah and protested to him: "What is the rationale of killing those about whom we are doubtful about their hostility towards us?" He replied: "If the person about whom you doubt is killed and he happens to be one of your supporters then you will have sent him to paradise earlier than his actual date. If he is from amongst your opponents then you would have sent him to hellfire earlier than his actual date." The caliph Mansur Dawaniqi had nicknamed Nafs Zakiyyah as "*khannaq*" which means one who suffocates others in large numbers, because Mughirah and his supporters used to say that suffocating their opponents was based on the legal ruling of Nafs Zakiyyah.<sup>165</sup>

Mughirah, on account of his expertise in magic and sorcery and his apparent love of the Ahl al-bayt, was gradually able to muster some strength in the society and subsequently lay claim to being the imam. After some time, as he observed that there was a naïve audience prepared to accept whatever he said, he decided to lay claim on being a prophet.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 8:121

<sup>166</sup> *Kitab al-milal wa al-nihal*, p. 152.

Mughirah observed that in the chaotic world it was possible to make wild claims and still anticipate a number, more or less, of naïve and gullible people to support him, especially with the help of magic and sorcery. As such, he was certain a group would support him even if he made a claim that he can perform the works of God. He was asked: "Are you able to bring the dead back to life?" He replied: "If I want, I could bring to life the tribes of Aad and Thamud and others."<sup>167</sup>

Mughirah had come to a realization that if he were to present himself as a lover of Imam Ali (a) and his family and attribute false miracles to them, he would be able to attract the supporters of the Ahl al-bayt and strengthen himself. For example, Mughirah has narrated the following miracle: "When Imam Ali (a) was in Basra a blind person came to him. The Imam (a) placed his hand on his eyes and his eyesight was restored. The Imam (a) asked him: 'Do you want to see Kufah?' He replied: 'Yes.' By way of the miracle of the Imam (a), Kufa came to Basra and the blind man was able to see the former upon which the Imam (a) instructed Kufa to return back to its original place"<sup>168</sup> Mughirah does not elaborate that when Kufa came to Basra, did it take the place of Basra and destroy it? Did he view this miracle of the Imam (a) to be similar to the magic that he himself carried out?

Mughirah attempted to interpret the verses of the Qur'an in such a manner as to make an ostentatious display of his intense love of Ali (a) and his family. For example, the Qur'anic verses: "God commands justice ('*adl*), doing

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<sup>167</sup> Tabari, 5:456.

<sup>168</sup> *Mizan al-i'tidal*, 4:162.



good (*ihsan*), and generosity towards relatives (*dhu al-qurba*) and He forbids what is shameful (*fahsha*), blameworthy (*munkar*), and oppressive. He teaches you, so that you may take heed" (Qur'an, 16:90). Mughirah asserted: "In this verse, "*adl*" refers to Ali (a) and "*Ihsan*" means Fatimah (a) and "*dhu al-qurba*" are Hasan (a) and Husayn (a); and "*fahsha*" and "*munkar*" are references to so and so and so and so"—He intended by this Abu Bakr and 'Umar.<sup>169</sup> This was the position adopted by those who were seeking worldly pleasures and they would say that whatever has been commanded in the Qur'an refers to persons who should be loved, and conversely, all that is prohibited refers to persons from whom one should keep away and distance himself/herself.

Mughirah paid attention to the psychological impact of the miracles upon the devotees of the Imams (a) when he was fabricating them in the sense that, if the miracles that are attributed to Ali (a) were in praise of his stature, then his followers would accept them without inquiring about the integrity of the narrators of such traditions. As a result, people became completely sentimental, such that intellect became impotent and of no value and utility in front of emotions. Mughirah exploited this weak point and benefited from it.

Mughirah presented himself outwardly as someone who was intensely attached to the Ahl al-bayt and claimed that all the knowledge that he held was miraculously obtained from them. He would say: "I went to one of the members of the Ahl al-bayt and the latter gave me some kind of sherbet as a result of which I instantly came to know all

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid, 4:160.

the sciences. There is no science that I am not knowledgeable about."<sup>170</sup>

Mughirah, in addition to his knowledge of magic and sorcery had also learnt some of the Islamic sciences; however, he utilized all this knowledge in the wrong path with the aim of acquiring power, position and pleasures. There is a tradition attributed to Imam Baqir (a) in which he says that the situation of Mughirah is analogous to that of Bal'am Ba'ur who had been the recipient of the sciences and signs of God; however, his worship and intense love of the world and the material objects resulted in his downfall:

"[Prophet], tell them the story of the man to whom We gave Our messages: he sloughed them off, so Satan took him as his follower and he went astray—if it had been Our will, We could have used these signs to raise him high, but instead he clung to the earth and followed his own desires—he was like a dog that pants with a lolling of those who reject Our signs. Tell them the story so that they may reflect" (Qur'an, 7:175-6). That is, Satan pulled him towards himself and this led to his going astray.<sup>171</sup> The part of the verse that talks about the dog is in regard to Bal'am.

Some have written that Mughira b. Sa'id had declared that all prohibited things were lawful.<sup>172</sup> If this report is true, then it would be correct to say that Mughirah b. Sa'id was one among the group who sought to legitimate

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 4:161.

<sup>171</sup> *Rijal al-Kashshi*, 2:494.

<sup>172</sup> Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 8:121.

seeking the pleasures of life and commission of vices and satisfying animalistic desires by recourse to the *Shari'ah* and religion.

One of the strategies of Mughirah b. Sa'ïd was to train students from amongst his loyal followers to become close allies of the companions of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a) by displaying intense love and attachment to the Imam (a) to demonstrate their sincerity in being a devoted Shi'i. When they obtained the confidence and trust of the companions of the Imam (a), they would ask the latter permission to borrow manuscripts that contained hadith reports of the Imam (a) with the purported aim of copying the manuscripts for their own purpose. These manuscripts were brought to Mughirah so that he could secretly insert fabricated reports in the copied manuscripts that were in keeping with his belief system. For example, if the *Book of Aban b. Taghlab* contained 200 hadiths narrated from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a), they would add fifty fabricated hadiths to it and attribute them all to the Imam (a). Then on the cover page of this manuscript they would write that this book has been compared with the original manuscript of Aban for accuracy. Subsequently, these copied manuscripts would be sent out to different parts of the Muslim world and people who were unaware of the real situation would be duped into accepting all the hadith reports as having come from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a). Imam Sadiq (a) describes this heinous practice in this manner:

"Mughirah consistently and intentionally used to attribute lies to my father by borrowing the books of the companions of my father through the intermediary of his followers who concealed their true identity. They would take the manuscripts of the companions of my

father on a loan and give them to Mughirah. Then, he would secretly insert the beliefs of unbelievers and *zindiq* (heretic, apostate) and attribute them to my father. These copied manuscripts containing the wrong beliefs were given to his companions and he would instruct them to distribute them widely amongst the Shi'is. Therefore, all that which is of an extremist tendency (*ghuluww*) in the works of the companions of my father are in actuality fabricated hadith reports that were inserted by Mughirah and his followers."<sup>173</sup>

We can infer several beneficial points from this hadith of Imam Sadiq (a):

1. Mughirah had set up a group of followers who obeyed his directives and were financially supported by him. It is evident that he had complete dominance over them such that they were content to kill others without a feeling of guilt let alone becoming spies and informants for him.
2. In the time of Imam Sadiq (a), the manuscripts of the companions of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a) contained hadiths that were of extremist nature (*ghuluww*) and appended with apparently sound chains of transmission. People were unaware that these were fabricated and as a result Imam Sadiq (a) warned his followers not to be duped into accepting such hadith reports. Instead, he advised them to pay attention to the text of the hadiths and bear in mind that if a hadith is of an

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<sup>173</sup> *Rijal al-Kashshi*, 2:491.

extremist nature then it must be one of the concocted traditions of Mughirah b. Sai'd. From this statement of the Imam (a), one general principle can be gleaned that to attain satisfaction on the veracity of a hadith report, it is not sufficient to have a sound and reliable chain of transmission. Rather, the text of the hadith must be analyzed such that if it is in conflict with a self-evident ruling or the reasoning faculty that produces certainty or with an undisputed hadith of the Prophet (S), it is not acceptable even if the apparent chain of transmission is reliable because many concocted hadith reports were attached with fabricated sound chains of transmission.

3. Mughirah b. Sa'id persistently fabricated hadith reports of extremist tendency that were mostly in regard to the praise of the Imams (a) so that he could exploit the sentiments of the followers of Ahl al-bayt and play on their emotions and at the same time attract them towards himself. He would present himself as a passionate lover of the Imams (a) with the aim of increasing his popularity and affinity and of attracting the followers of the Ahl al-bayt towards him. With this, he was hoping to form a strong and an efficacious group that would be reckoned as a group worthy of attention and admiration.

Mughirah said to Imam Baqir (a): "Inform people that you possess knowledge of the unseen and in return I will bring the whole of Iraq under your

dominance.”<sup>174</sup> Imam rejected him and his proposal outright. No doubt, what is intended by Mughirah is knowledge of the unseen that is of an essential and an absolute nature that is limited to God alone. What is the relationship between the unseen knowledge and gaining dominance over Iraq? The aim of Mughirah was that if the Imam (a) was introduced to the Iraqis as someone who had power of the scope that is not possible for humans to possess and at the same time introduce himself as his deputy then he would be able to muster a group that would be worthy of notice and consequently fulfill an essential step in attaining his goal. When the Imam (a) is able to reach the heights of Godhood, his deputy can reach the rank of a prophet with great influence amongst the religious people. In this manner he would be able to bring Iraq under his control. However, because the Imam (a) vehemently rejected him and his proposal, he became hopeless of receiving any cooperation from the Imam (a) and subsequently opted to create false hadiths of an extremist nature and incorporate them in the book of the companions of the Imam (a).

Imam Sadiq (a) continuously reminded the people of this interpolation and distortion in the books of his companions and cursed Mughirah b. Sa'id because he was aware that there were fabricated hadiths present in the works of the companions of his father like the ones that made claims of divinity of the Imams (a) and other

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<sup>174</sup> Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 8:121.

reports that had spread widely. An example of such a curse issued by the Imam (a) is:

"May God curse Mughirah b. Sa'id because he attributed lies to my father and may He punish him with the intense heat that can dissolve iron. May God curse the one who says things about us that we have not said ourselves. May God curse the person who elevates our status beyond servitude to God by attaching lordship on us—we are the servants of God. He created us and our return is back to Him and we are subdued under the scope of His power."<sup>175</sup>

This is how Shahrastani describes this sect under the name of Mughiriyya:

These are the followers of Mughira b. Sa'id al-'Ijli. Mughira claimed that after Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Husain the imamate belonged to Muhammad al-Nafs al-Zakiya, the 'pure soul,' son of 'Abdullah b. Hasan b. Hasan, who rose in revolt in Medina. He believed that Muhammad was still alive and had not died. Mughira was *mawla* of Khalid b. 'Abdullah al-Qasri. After Imam Muhammad he claimed for himself first the imamate, then the prophethood. He also considered forbidden things lawful. Regarding 'Ali he went to extremes beyond the credibility of any sane person.

Mughira also believed in anthropomorphism. He said that God has a form and a body, having parts as letters of the alphabet do. His form is that of a man made of light

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<sup>175</sup> Qahba'i, Inayat Allah b. Ali *Majma' al-rijal*, 6:118.

upon whose head is a crown of light, and from whose heart wisdom springs forth. He maintained, too, that when God willed to create the world he uttered his Great Name, which flew down upon his head in the form of a crown. This, he said, is the meaning of God's words: 'Glorify the Great Names of your Lord who created and gave proportion' (Qur'an, 87:1).....

When Mughira was killed, his followers differed among themselves. Some believed that they should wait for his return, whereas others believed in waiting for the imamate of Muhammad just as he himself had done. Mughira had believed in the imamate of Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Ali, but went to extremes regarding him and believed in his divinity. As a result, Baqir [the fifth Shi'i Imam] dissociated himself from him and anathematized him.

Mughira had said to his followers, 'Wait for him (Abu Ja'far). He will come back, and Gabriel and Michael will swear allegiance to him between the *rukṇ* (the corner of the Ka'bah) and the *maqam* (the standing place of Abraham).' He also declared that Abu Ja'far would bring back the dead to life.<sup>176</sup>

### Opinion of Mughirah Regarding God

Mughirah b. Sa'id, not only elevated the status of a human to Godhood but he also brought down the status of God to the level of His servants. He would say that God is like a man with a crown on his head and a heart that is flooded with wisdom. The number of His organs

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<sup>176</sup> *Kitab al-milal wa al-nihal*, pp. 152-3.



comprise the letters in the Arabic alphabet. When He wanted to create His creation he spelled out the *ism-e a'zam* (Great Name) that flew up in the air and finally settled on the crown or became the crown itself. He wrote down on the palm of his hand by his index finger all the acts of obedience and disobedience of His servants. When His eyes fell upon the acts of disobedience and sin, He became extremely angry and on account of this intense anger he perspired to such a great extent that it formed two seas—one of them salty and dark and the other one refreshing and clear. Thereafter, He looked at His own image in the sea and desired to grab it but it escaped and He pursued it. Finally He grasped this image and plucked out two of its eyes from the socket and destroyed it to prevent having two gods. From one of his eyes he created the sun and with the other another sun or the sky or the moon. He created the unbelievers from the water of the salty and dark sea and the believers from the refreshing and clean water.<sup>177</sup>

Shahraṣṭānī writes about Muḡhira on the issue of divine trust (*amanat*) as follows:

God then proposed to heaven, earth and the mountains that they take upon themselves 'the trust,' namely, of protecting 'Ali from [those seeking to do him injustice in regard to] the imamate but they refused. God next proposed the trust to men. 'Umar asked Abu Bakr to undertake it and promised to help him in the betrayal of 'Ali, provided he appointed him to the caliphate as his successor. This he agreed

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<sup>177</sup> Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 5:208, Shāhṛasṭānī, *Kitāb al-mīlāl wa al-nihāl*, p. 152.

to do, and in outward appearance they both set out to protect 'Ali. This is what God has said, "Man undertook it; he indeed was unjust and foolish" (Qur'an, 33:72).<sup>178</sup>

Mughirah b. Sa'id interpreted this Qur'anic verse 72 in chapter of the Confederates (*Ahزاب*) in the manner stated above in order to attract the supporters and lovers of Imam Ali (a) and employ their help in attaining his goal. The fact that he resorted to magic and sorcery for his own work, it is not far-fetched that he made the above statements.

It is important to observe that Mughirah b. Sa'id interpreted the word "trust" (*amanat*) in the Qur'anic verse as sins and prohibited acts because according to him preventing Imam Ali (a) from assuming the position of the Imam (a) is an act of sin whereas "trust" (*amanat*) in reality does not have such a meaning. Further, he says that God offered the sins and prohibited acts to the skies and the earth, whereas in actuality God never bestows such a thing on anyone or anything. On the contrary, He prohibits the commission of sins. Also, it can be said that since the skies and the earth did not accept this kind of a "trust" (*amanat*) it implies that they had a better understanding of the reality than God. Certainly, not more can be expected from Mughirah who had conceptualized a god that runs after his own image in order to grab it. Undoubtedly, if Mughirah was

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<sup>178</sup> Shahrastani, *Kitab al-milal wa al-nihal*, p. 153. "We offered the Trust to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains, yet they refused to undertake it and were afraid of it; mankind undertook it—they have always been inept and foolish" (Qur'an, 33:72).

questioned on the incredulous kind of interpretation of the aforementioned verse, he would respond that this constitutes esoteric commentary of the Qur'anic verse!

### Mughirah Tarnishes the Character of the Imams (a)

It is natural that if an immoral or a detested person attaches himself to a pure and prestigious person it is inevitably going to have a negative impact on the personality and dignity of the latter, because ordinary people are not able to correctly analyze such events that occur in the society. When they hear that Mughirah b. Sa'id outwardly claims to be devoted to Imam Baqir (a) and says all these lies and false ideas that are against Islam and spreads them widely, then certainly the general public would develop a negative opinion of the Imam (a) and try to keep a distance from him and not listen to his statements, resulting in his marginalization and isolation. Imam Sadiq (a) alludes to this when he says: "We are a family of integrity and truthfulness that has become linked with the liars such that our true statements are mixed with their false statements and as a result are viewed of no value in the eyes of the public. The Messenger of God (S) was the most truthful person but Musaylimah attributed lies on him." Here, Imam Baqir (a) ranks the likes of Mughirah b. Sa'id, Bazi', Sirri and Abu al-Khattab amongst the liars and says: "We are not safe from the evils of the liars and the evil of those who have incompatible views. May God keep away from us the evil that emanates from these liars and give them a taste of the intense heat that could dissolve iron."<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> *Rijal al-Kashshi*, 2:593.

A point that can be obtained from the Imam's (a) statement is that these lies have a negative influence on how they are perceived by the public, especially by those who are weak in intellect and do not hold a solid opinion on issues. People who are unable to reach the depth of issues or determine the real causes of various effects and fall under the sway of the environment would attribute the deviant ideas of Mughirah to Imam Baqir (a) and subsequently regard the latter as not worthy of confidence and trust in the society. In this hadith, such people are referred to as *ajiz al-ra'y* which means incompetent to think and develop a sound opinion. They lack any depth and are superficial and prone to be duped. They cannot fathom that rumors that have been ascribed to Imam Muhammad Baqir (a) in the society that he believes in his own divinity and lordship could be against the reality and not the statements of the Imam (a). These people are incompetent in reaching their own views and shallow in their understanding, whose number is not insignificant in the society. Imam Ali (a) says regarding them: "They do not possess insight in analyzing the truth. At the first instance of doubt they would entertain misgivings in their hearts."<sup>180</sup>

Imam Sadiq (a) in the above hadith painfully complains about two groups of people: One is the group of liars who fabricate reports and cunningly attribute them to the Imams (a) and ascribe to them extremist thoughts and ideas. The second group is the one that possesses a superficial and a shallow quality of thinking and as such is unable to analyze a situation and reach a sound opinion. Consequently, they believe in the false reports

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<sup>180</sup> *Nahj al-balagha*, Saying no. 147, p. 601.

of the liars and spread them around and unwittingly become a source of support for the malefactors. The outcome of the actions of these two groups negatively impacts the esteem of the Imams (a) in the Islamic society and is the cause of public rejection of the true statements of the Imams (a).

It is true that the primary reason for the isolation and marginalization of the Imams (a) was brought about by the political leaders of the government who used every means to appropriate power but, without a shadow of doubt, the lies that were made up by persons such as Mughirah b. Sa'id and their quick acceptance on the part of those who were shallow-minded contributed greatly to the seclusion of the Imams (a).

#### The Killing of Mughirah b. Sa'id by the Command of the Ruler of Iraq

Mughirah b. Sa'id, by the employment of all kinds of stratagems and deceits, was able to exert substantial influence on people to such an extent that they would believe in his legal rulings and apply them in their lives. For example, he had issued a ruling to the effect that water of the Euphrates is ritually unclean (*najis*) because all kinds of impurities and carcasses fall into it. As a result, it would be prohibited to drink from it and every river that comes in contact with the impure water of the Euphrates also becomes impure.<sup>181</sup> His legal rulings had such a wide currency that after his killing they were still talked about in the society and as a result Imam Sadiq (a)

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<sup>181</sup> Muhammad Taqi Tustari, *Qamus al-rijal*, 12 vols. (Qum: Mu'assasat al-nashr al-Islami, 1990), 9:83.

was compelled to explain to the public the falsity of such statements. Abu Hilal asked Imam Sadiq (a): "Does the blood from the nose and vomiting and pulling the hair from the armpit nullify the ablution (*wudu*)?" The Imam (a) replied: "This is the legal ruling of Mughirah b. Sa'id, may God curse him, and it does not render the *wudu*' void."<sup>182</sup> Mughirah b. Sa'id, a cunning and deceitful politician, was able to acquire a sense of holiness for himself such that his legal rulings continued to circulate widely and remain current years after his killing.

Mughirah b. Sa'id was eager to obtain a leadership position and was finally able to form a group that obeyed his instructions and directives unquestioningly to such an extent that they would kill those who dissented from him. He had carefully evaluated the strengths and expertise of each member of his group and was waiting for an opportune time to fight militarily in order to attain power. The headquarters of his group and his followers and the stack of armaments were in Kufa. The leaders of Kufa were well aware of his group and the influence it had in the society. Finally, in the year 738 C.E., during the caliphate of Hisham b. Abd al-Malik and the beginning of the Imamate of Imam Sadiq (a) at which time Khalid b. Abdallah al-Qusari was the ruler of Iraq, Mughirah saw a day in that year as the ideal one to launch an attack by giving a call to his followers to get ready for war. He began to move out of Kufa with his followers that numbered thirty. This military uprising when it was publicly announced coincided with the time

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<sup>182</sup> Muhammad b. Hasan al-Tusi, *Tahdhib al-ahkam*, ed. al-Sayyid Hasan Khorasan, 10 vols. (Tehran: Dar al-kutub al-Islamiyyah, 1986), 1:349, hadith no. 18.

when the ruler of Iraq was on the pulpit delivering the Friday sermon. While giving the sermon, he was informed of the tumultuous uprising of Mughirah b. Sa'id and his followers. The ruler of Iraq was intimately aware of the political party of Mughirah and its influence in the society. He was not confident of being able to subdue the rebellion instigated by them. This enormous stress and state of perplexity made him sweat profusely, made his mouth dry and urinate in his pants. He said: "*at'imuni al-ma*", i.e. give me water. This incident became like a good template for the poets and an opportunity to satirize him. In the words of one of the poets: "You as the ruler of Iraq, upon being very thirsty said "*at'imuni*" instead of saying "*ashribuni*" and urinated on your throne and on the pulpit."<sup>183</sup>

The ruler of Iraq thought profoundly on this matter and gave directions to his government forces to militarily confront the followers of Mughirah. In this confrontation, the government forces were able to overpower and completely defeat their opponents. Mughirah b. Sa'id along with seven of his followers were arrested.

The ruler of Iraq was overflowing with joy and happiness and at the same time proud for gaining a clear victory over the group led by Mughirah b. Sa'id. This resulted in the pleasure and satisfaction of the caliph, Hisham b. Abd al-Malik, and simultaneously uprooted a dangerous sedition that could have destabilized his control over Iraq. When the ruler was in the state of this joy and happiness, he gave instruction that his throne be brought

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<sup>183</sup> Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 6:110-11.

to the central mosque along with Mughirah and his followers who had been arrested so that he could sit and pass judgment against them in public. The Amir gave orders that a bundle of bamboo sticks; and fuel be set aside. He told Mughirah b. Sa'id to grasp one of the bundles of the bamboo sticks, however, the latter got terrified and declined to do so. Consequently, the Amir gave instruction to flagellate Mughirah which forced the latter to hold on to one of the bundle of bamboo sticks. Thereafter, the Amir gave an order to pour fuel on the bamboo sticks and Mughirah and then to set them on fire. Thus, these six or seven people were burnt alive in the same manner in front of the public.<sup>184</sup> In another report it says that when Mughirah was brought into the presence of the Amir he offered the latter to subscribe to his ideology; however, he declined and asked Mughirah to seek repentance but he did not accept and was subsequently executed.<sup>185</sup> Still others report that when Amir gave orders to light up one bundle of bamboo sticks and Mughirah to grab it the latter declined but one of his followers, who was arrested at the same time as he was, grabbed on to one of the bundles while it was on fire and burnt himself alive. As a result, the Amir said to Mughirah that this person was more worthy of being his leader and not vice versa.<sup>186</sup> What he meant was that this follower of Mughirah had greater conviction on his ideology than Mughirah himself. And some have said that because Mughirah had made claims of becoming a prophet, he was executed because this is the punishment

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<sup>184</sup> Tabari, 5:456.

<sup>185</sup> *al-Maqalat wa al-firaq*, p. 77.

<sup>186</sup> *Mizan al-i'tidal*, 4:162.



for one guilty of this sin.<sup>187</sup> One report states that at the time when Mughirah and his followers were brought in the company of the Amir, one of his followers was killed and Mughirah was asked to fulfill his claim that he can bring the dead back to life. Mughirah replied that "by God, I am not able to revive the dead."<sup>188</sup>

### Sedition of Mughirah b. Sa'id Continues

The sedition that was instituted by Mughirah did not come to an end with his killing; rather it continued by means of his followers who used different methods and strategies. Among them, the two that caused the most harm are given below.

1. The open rejection by Mughirah b. Sa'id of the imamate of Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a), upon the death of his father by claiming that the divinely designated person for this position was Muhammad b. Abdallah b. al-Hasan, famously known as Nafs Zakiyyah. The followers of Mughirah argued that this Nafs Zakiyyah was also the Mahdi who would return in the future and Gabriel and Michael would pay allegiance to him between *rukn* (the corner of the Ka'bah) and *maqam* (the standing place of Abraham).<sup>189</sup> They believed that after the death of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a), the line of succession would not continue in the family of Ali (a) until the re-

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 4:161.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 4:162.

<sup>189</sup> Shahrastani, *Kitab al-milal wa al-nihal*, p.153.

emergence of Nafs Zakiyyah as the Mahdi who, they believed, was never killed or died.

It is natural that after the killing of Mughirah his followers would continue to contest the imamate of Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a). They even included in their belief system that Mughirah died as a martyr and continued to apply the legal rulings that were issued by Mughirah. As was mentioned earlier in the matter of applied *fiqh*, his legal rulings were in wide circulation as a result of which Imam Sadiq (a) had to repeatedly mention the falsity of Mughirah's rulings.

Muhammad b. Abdallah b. al-Hasan (Nafs Zakiyyah) was killed in 762 C.E. in a severe confrontation in Medina, which was the center of his uprising, between his forces and Mansur Dawaniqi.<sup>190</sup> This event occurred 26 years after the killing of Mughirah, but the rejection of the imamate of Imam Sadiq (a) was still current and his followers had added the belief that Nafs Zakiyyah was the promised Mahdi. As you can see, the followers of Mughirah, after the killing of Nafs Zakiyyah, regarded him as the legitimate Imam who would reappear in the future in keeping with the saying of Mughirah that Gabriel and Michael would pay allegiance to him between *ruk'n* and *maqam*. This, of course, constituted a rejection of the imamate of Imam Sadiq (a).

It is important to observe that a stubborn and bigoted group which consisted of the followers of

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<sup>190</sup> Ibn Athir, *al-Kamil*, 5:550.

Mughirah opposed Imam Sadiq (a) on all fronts—be it on the belief system, legal rulings or in the political arena—and this group firmly stood against the Imam (a) and considered it its religious obligation to challenge him. Many of the things that were established by Imam Sadiq (a) were destroyed or undermined by them and this situation continued for some time, demonstrating the severity of the adverse effects ensuing from Imam Sadiq's (a) opponents.

2. The second method was the increase in the fabrication of false hadith reports and their wide circulation amongst the public in order to enhance the popularity of the ideas subscribed by Mughirah b. Sa'id. Before, it was mentioned that Mughirah used to fabricate hadith reports of extremist nature and insert them in the copied manuscripts of the companions of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a). He taught these skills to his followers and they assisted him in carrying out this forgery. So, it would be natural for his followers, after the death of Mughirah, to consider it a religious duty to continue to interpolate manuscripts with concocted hadith reports of extremist nature. This was done with such skill that one would not be able to realize that interpolation had taken place because Mughirah and his followers would append a sound chain of transmission to the false hadith report.

Manuscripts that contained false hadith reports were not expunged until the time of Imam Rida (a) because we know that Yunus b. Abd al-

Rahman, who was a companion of Imam Rida (a), fell into the trap of copying from an interpolated and distorted manuscript of hadith reports in which many of the hadiths were fabricated. Imam Rida (a) pointed out to him the ones that were fabricated and reminded him to be cautious in the future.<sup>191</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that these interpolated manuscripts were expunged of the false and extremist hadith reports. Rather, the process naturally continued such that fabricated hadith reports were inserted into other works. As such, sedition that was started by Mughirah b. Sa'id carried on.

In summary, the sedition started by Mughirah b. Sa'id continued after his killing in many forms—two of which were more destructive than others. One was the rejection of the imamate of Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a) and the other was fabrication and spreading of extremist hadith reports amongst the public and attributing them to Imam Muhammad Baqir (a).

This brings to a close the second aspect of the heinous triangle and we can start to discuss the third and the last aspect.

### III Third Aspect of the Ominous Triangle: Extremist Naïve Friends of the Imams (a)

The third group that fabricated extremist hadith reports regarding the Imams (a) consisted of their extremist

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<sup>191</sup> *Rijal al-Kashshi*, p. 224.

friends and supporters. They fell under the spell of their excessive and sentimental love of the Imams (a) and desired to satisfy their pangs of love for them. These enamored followers had no ill intention in exaggerating the virtues of the Prophet (S) and the Imams (a) rather it was motivated on sincerity and devotion. When in this state of obsessive love and enthusiasm they fabricated hadith reports in praise of these personages in order to respond to their sentimental attachment to the Imams (a). They elevated the status of the beloved partly to attract the attention of others to obtain conviction in the Imams (a) and to love them with intensity. This is a natural response of an enamored lover, because love does not understand logic and proofs. Basically, love is a power without intelligence that does not understand the major and minor premises to formulate a syllogism and prove or disprove the issue by way of logical proofs. Rather, love is a strength that is a catalyst for movement without distinguishing whether this movement is good or bad, beneficial or harmful. It is the faculty of intellect that discriminates between benefit and harm and guides the movement of a person. In this regard, Imam Ali (a) says: "Certainly you [Kharijites] are the most evil of all persons and are those whom Satan has put on his lines and thrown out into his wayless land. With regard to me, two categories of persons will face ruin and destruction: he who loves me too much and the love takes him away from rightfulness, and he who hates me too much and the hatred takes him away from rightfulness. The best man with regard to me is he who is on the middle course"<sup>192</sup> and "Two categories of persons will face ruin

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<sup>192</sup> *Nahj al-Balagha*, Sermon 126, p. 280.

and destruction: he who loves me with exaggeration, and he who hates me intensely."<sup>193</sup>

Here, the Imam (a) views both—extreme love and extreme bigotry—as agents of deviance and destruction. From this it becomes clear that neither love nor hatred contain any power of reasoning or intellect; rather, it only contains the strength of movement that, if not harnessed by intellect, would pull the human towards destruction. If love or hatred were able to discriminate by way of intellect, it would not lead to one's deterioration. An enamored lover whose intellect is impotent in bridling his love will fabricate exaggerated virtues for his beloved while blazing with love to gratify himself and quench the thirst of his soul. In this sphere, his intellect becomes completely paralyzed and impotent.

### A Living Example of Fabricated Report

Here, I would like to bring forth a living example of a fabricated report for our discussion and analysis.

Muslim Student Association (Persian Speaking Group) attributed the following statement to Imam Khumayni who was reported to have said it in praise of Ayatullah Muntazari: "He is the fruit of my life and I become condensed in him." This was mentioned not just once but many times.... After his death, the Islamic Association published a forty-four page booklet authored by Shahid Mutahhari titled *Nazargha-e Islam piramun-e mawzu'e ghiri tabaqati*. This booklet was a part of the book *Jami'ah wa ta'rikh* and was dedicated to Ayatullah

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid., Saying 117, p. 594.

Muntazari. On the first page it was written: "Dedicated to a dear and loyal friend who was a partner for years in combating injustice—eminent jurist, courageous struggler Ayatullah Muntazari—who is the hope of Imam Khumayni and the oppressed community of Iran about whom Imam Khumayni has said: 'He is the fruit of my life and I become condensed in him.' This was mentioned not just once but many times..." However, Ayatullah Muntazari in a Friday sermon that was aired on Iranian TV channel vociferously refuted the purported statement ascribed to Imam Khumayni and underlined that this lie should not be repeated in the future. During his meeting with Imam Khumayni on Thursday, October 23, 1986 he again categorically refuted the aforementioned statement.

The purported statement of Imam Khumayni that was related by the MSA had a sound chain of transmission in the sense that the party who related it is definitely worthy of confidence and trust because the MSA is counted as a pure and loyal strength for the support of Islam. After the success of the Iranian Islamic revolution, they made sacrifices for the advancement of Islam. This demonstrates that a lie can be transmitted by a reliable and a sound source. However, where is the original source of this false statement?

The above is a living example of a fabricated report that is spread by the agency of enamored lovers who, without any evil motive, so fall under the influence of the dazzling love of the beloved that they make up a virtue so that their soul can become content and satiated.

In the vibrant and enthusiastic environment after the revolution, it was natural that the enamored lovers of the beloved, in all sincerity fall under the influence of their intense love and manufacture a virtue in favor of Ayatullah Muntaziri. This statement of Imam Khumayni in the post-revolution environment quickly spread by word of mouth, reaching all assemblies and dispersing far and wide till it reached the level of *tawatur*— almost certainty for having been transmitted through numerous chains of transmissions. Accordingly, the Association was sure that the statement was true and as a result published it in their booklet without any hesitation.

MSA was not the only one who related this statement without any hesitation and ascribed it to Imam Khumayni. Rather, some of the government institutions printed many copies of the posters on glossy paper with the picture of Ayatullah Muntaziri on them. Under his name, in a big and attractive font, was written that Imam Khumayni has said: "I have become condensed in him on various occasions." This poster decorated many walls. The government institutions assumed that the statement ascribed belonged to Imam Khumayni and printed this on thousands of posters, whereas in actuality this statement was never made by Imam Khumayni.

There is no trace of the one who fabricated this statement. The MSA and the government institutions did not report it from a reliable person; rather, because it was spread far and wide they attained certainty of its truthfulness and, in reality, had obtained the report from their surrounding environment. This is a living example of a fabricated report that was manufactured by one out



of excessive love and with good intention hoping to render service towards attaining truth.

### Another Living Example

Agha-ye Husayn Imadzaden writes in praise of Imam Sadiq (a): "Imam Sadiq, during his fifty years, established and gave shape to the Ja'fari school of thought. In this madrasah, approximately 20,000 intellectuals graduated and each one of them was trained and became the leader of a country. From these 20,000 about 4,000 were distinguished and qualified jurists (*faqih*) and from these 4,000 about 400 became authors who wrote about the Islamic sciences and these were referred to as "the 400 sources (*usul arba' mi'ah*)" because they authored a work that was endorsed by Imam Sadiq (a). Up to the time of Imam Mahdi (a), they were the primary sources employed for discussion on jurisprudential matters. Imam Sadiq (a) alone was teaching 220 branches of knowledge."<sup>194</sup>

I want to say a few words about the above statement of Mr. Imadzadeh: "In this madrasah, approximately 20,000 intellectuals graduated and each one of them was trained as and became the leader of a country." In accordance with the book *Complete Geography of the World* that is authored by Habibullah Shamlu'i, published in 1986, the total number of countries in the five continents adds up to 242 with the following breakdown:

Asia—52 countries

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<sup>194</sup> Husayn Imadzadeh, *Khulasah-ye az Usul-e kafi* (Tehran: Amiri, 1978), p. 18.

Africa—63 countries  
America—55 countries  
Europe—39 countries  
Australia—33 countries  
Total number of countries: 242

Instead of making such audacious and incredible claims, it would have been better for Mr. Imadzadeh to point out one country where one of the graduates of Imam Sadiq (a) became the ruler. In the world, such a country never existed and will never exist.

The above report that has been related by Mr. Imadzadeh appears to be sound and reliable because the narrator, Mr. Imadzadeh, is a thoughtful Muslim and apparently just, and everyone knows that he is not prone to lying. Then, how is it possible for such a big lie to come out of a just person? The answer to this question is that Mr. Imadzadeh was blinded by his intense love of Imam Sadiq (a) such that he allowed his pen to write whatever emanated from his passionate love of the Imam (a). This kind of love does not possess intellectual powers and as such he wrote down whatever his heart desired without a pause. It is evident that in such a state, the intellect of the human being becomes paralyzed and is not able to come to the fore and cannot appreciate the negative effects of these kinds of big lies. Such a person cannot fathom that there are objective scholars who perform research about Shi'i Islam. If they come across the writings of Mr. Imadzadeh and subject them to analysis they would discover these big lies that would have the effect of making them pessimistic and cynical about the essence of that religion and would say: "A religion that fabricates such a big lie for its leader (Imam) maybe good for its own followers, but can never

guide the people of the world.” The impotent intellect cannot understand the great injustice and inequity that has been perpetrated against this infallible and oppressed Imam (a) who has suffered on account of his own followers and supporters, and his soul has been inflicted with pain as a result of such a big lie.

Mr. Imadzadeh in this twenty-five page introduction of the work *Khulasah-ye az Usul-e kafi*, has written other undocumented things. A sample of it is as follows:

1. In this madrasah, approximately 20,000 intellectuals graduated and each one of them was trained and became the leader of a country and from these 20,000 about 4,000 were distinguished and qualified jurists (*faqih*).<sup>195</sup> This report is without a source and unreliable.
2. From these 4,000 about 400 became authors who wrote about the Islamic sciences and these were referred to as the “400 sources (*usul arba‘ mi’ah*)” because they authored a work that was endorsed by Imam Sadiq (a).<sup>196</sup> This also is stated without a source and no one has ever said that 400 books were signed by Imam Sadiq (a).
3. Imam Sadiq (a) alone was teaching 220 branches of knowledge.

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

4. He writes that: "In the battle of Harrah, the troops of Yazid raped twelve thousand girls."<sup>197</sup> This is once again provided without a source. His hatred against Yazid was the cause of inflating the numbers by more than tenfold.
5. He writes: "the *Rawzah-ye Kafi* contains reports dealing with khums only."<sup>198</sup> This is contrary to the reality and at the same time laughable because from this statement it becomes clear that Mr. Imadzadeh never saw the *Rawdah-ye Kafi*, otherwise he would not have uttered such an uncontested lie.
6. "Imam Sadiq during his fifty years established and gave shape to the Ja'fari school of thought." This, once again, is not true because the tenure of imamate of Imam Sadiq (a) was between thirty and thirty-four years and was never half a century.

If the rest of the books that are written by Mr. Imadzadeh are of the same caliber in terms of accuracy and reliability as his abridgment of *Usul-e Kafi* then my heart goes out to the one who reads his works while being uninformed of the subject matter.

#### Number of Companions of Imam Sadiq (a)

It is famously known that the number of companions of Imam Sadiq (a) numbered 4,000. Ibn Uqdah who is a traditionist (*muhaddith*) of the Zaydi school of thought has written a book containing all the names of persons

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

who narrated hadith reports on the authority of Imam Sadiq (a). Shaykh Tusi writes at the beginning of his work under the first narrator: "The most detailed work on this subject is the book by Ibn Uqdah." He complemented his work by adding narrators that Ibn Uqdah had missed out. In total, the number of narrators are 3,224 suggesting that the famous statement that Imam Sadiq (a) had 4,000 narrators is an approximate guess. The late Mir Damad writes: "*rijalu-hu zuha' arba'ah alaf rajul*."<sup>199</sup> The word "*zuha*" is applied in cases where the number of something is an approximation, making it clear that the intent of Mir Damad was to say that the number of companions of Imam Sadiq (a) was in the vicinity of 4,000.

#### The Narrators of Imam Sadiq (a) are not of the same Caliber

It is necessary to point out that the narrators of hadith reports who related on the authority of Imam Sadiq (a) and have been enumerated by Shaykh Tusi comprise people who transmitted hadith from the Imam (a)—be they Shi'i or Sunni; friend or enemy; literate or illiterate; just or unjust; honest or liar; transmitter of multiple hadiths from the Imam (a) or just a few; being famous or unknown. For instance, Shaykh Tusi includes Abu Hanifah, founder of the Hanafi school of thought, and Malik b. Anas, founder of the Maliki school of thought, Mansur Dawaniqi who was a brutal and savage Abbasid caliph and Wahb b. Wahb Abu al-Bukhtari who was a government-appointed Sunni judge known for his dishonesty. Further, there are narrators about whom we have little or no knowledge, except for their names and

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<sup>199</sup> *al-Dhari'ah*, 2:130.

in some cases even this is not available. Therefore, one should not fancy that all these thousands of narrators were students of Imam Sadiq (a) and studied under him, because most of these narrators did not live in Medina to be able to attend the Imam's (a) classes. Rather, they were from different cities, close to or far away from Medina. Accordingly, the oft-repeated statement that Imam Sadiq (a) had 4,000 students in Medina studying at his feet is not true because many of them were not residents of Medina and the caliph of the time would not tolerate a gathering of such a size studying under the Imam (a). In addition, we have no sound historical evidence to sustain this repeated statement. In this regard, there is no historical documentation to support the affirmation made by Shahid Mutahhari in his work on the biography of the Imams (a) that Imam Sadiq (a) had a circle of 4,000 students.<sup>200</sup>

There was a small group of people who were intelligent, pious and holding the Imam (a) in high esteem who were in contact with the Imam (a) for many years, acquired knowledge from him, and heard and recorded hadiths from him, including Zurarah and Muhammad b. Muslim and Fudayl b. Yasar and Aban b. Taghlab and Burayd b. Mu'awiyah Ajali and others of the same rank, whether they lived in Medina or not. These people would spend substantial amounts of time with the Imam (a) whenever they were in Medina, listening and recording hadiths from him and therefore can accurately be called students of the Imam (a). However, this label cannot be applied to those who are unknown or related only one hadith from the Imam (a) or who oppressed the Imam (a)

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<sup>200</sup> *Sayri dar sireh-ye a'imma-ye athar*, p. 236.

such as the Abbasid caliph Mansur Dawaniqui. However, they can legitimately be called narrators (*rijal*) of the Imam's (a) hadiths.

### Most of the Narrators were not Shi'is

It is probable that most of the 3,224 narrators that are mentioned by Shaykh Tusi were not Shi'is in the sense that we use this term today. Most of the people were followers of the *madhhab* of the ruler, who at that time was *Ahl al-sunnah*. The Shi'is in that period were in the minority and were subject to distress, torture and fear, and as a result had to exercise dissimulation (*taqiyyah*) on many occasions.

### Circle of 4,000 Students

It has become popularized that Imam Sadiq (a) taught 4,000 students in Medina and had established Imam Sadiq (a) University, but it must be noted that this claim has no historical documentation and is quite unlikely for a number of reasons:

1. The number of narrators who related hadith reports on the authority of Imam Sadiq (a) is 3,224 and not 4,000.
2. We have no historical documentation that Imam Sadiq (a) had set up a circle of 4,000 students or had established Imam Sadiq (a) University in Medina. Whatever has been said on this matter is merely a rumor and hearsay with no historical support. Perhaps, this rumor originated from the statement that there were 4,000 narrators who

related hadith reports from Imam Sadiq (a). This was then probably interpreted to mean that Imam Sadiq (a) had 4,000 students.

3. The sensitivity of the political situation and animosity that the Abbasid caliphs harbored with regard to Imam Sadiq (a) would never allow him to establish a circle of 4,000 students with the ability to teach them whatever he liked without any restrictions. It is known that the unjust caliphs had Imam Sadiq (a) under surveillance and they harassed him under different pretenses to such an extent that the people did not have free and easy access to the Imam (a) to ask their religious questions and were forced to exercise dissimulation (*taqiyyah*). How is it possible to imagine that in such an environment the Imam (a) could gather 4,000 students, all converging in Medina?
4. Most of the narrators who related hadith reports from Imam Sadiq (a) were not residents of Medina; rather, they were from different regions such as Kufa, Mecca, Sana, Wasit, Qum, Isfahan, Basrah, Mashhad, Halab, Rayy, Damascus, Yemen, Daylam, Taef, Kabul and Andalus, with the majority from Iraq, especially the city of Kufa. These people who lived in different parts of the Muslim world during the 34 years of Imam Sadiq's (a) tenure sometimes were able to go to Medina and hear the hadiths from the Imam (a). These sessions took place mostly during the hajj season, because people who went for pilgrimage would make a short stopover in Medina and



during this time sometimes were able to meet the Imam (a) and listen to his statements. Is it possible to set up a circle of 4,000 students from these individuals who were spread out and dispersed in different parts of the world or to set up an impressive and grand teaching session from the limited students who were residing in Medina? Such a situation was never possible.

From the above discussion, it becomes quite clear that what is written by Shahid Mutahhari: "Imam Sadiq (a) was able to benefit during the period of struggle and conflict between the Umayyad and the Abbasid by establishing a circle of 4,000 students" is a repetition of the same hearsay that was in wide circulation but has no historical evidence. This is the outcome of the presence of hearsay and gossip so prevalent in our environment that even scholars become impacted. In addition, relying upon one's memory when relating historical account can sometimes be the cause of errors such as in the case of Shahid Mutahhari who relied on his memory when he wrote that Andalus was conquered at the time of Imam Sadiq (a)<sup>201</sup> whereas Andalus was conquered in the year 711 C.E. during the caliphate of Walid b. Abd al-Malik<sup>202</sup> that coincided with the imamate of Imam Sajjad (a) who is reported to have died in 713 C.E.

### Dishonest Scholars

We saw what kinds of serious lies that conflicted with reality were written while wanting to praise Imam Sadiq

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<sup>201</sup> *Sayri dar sireh-ye a'immah-ye athar*, p. 145.

<sup>202</sup> *Ta'rikh al-khulafa'*, p. 224.

(a) by someone who is counted amongst the famous scholars, Mr. Husayn Imadzadeh. These kinds of fabricated reports were spread far and wide by such people who unintentionally denigrated and did harm to our school of thought.

It is necessary to point out that in previous time, some people who were viewed as famous scholars like Mr. Husayn Imadzadeh, fabricated many reports under the subject of hadith or history and dispersed them amongst the public. A good portion of these manufactured reports are still present in books of hadiths and history. Some of these concocted reports have an influence on the belief system of the people and provide them with a mode of thinking and creates in them a mindset that influences their belief system. Some examples of this sort are provided below:

1. There is a long hadith consisting of 35 pages recorded in *Bihar al-anwar*<sup>203</sup> that deals with the timing of the reappearance of Imam Mahdi along with the ensuing events that are to transpire after his return. It is famously known as the tradition of al-Mufaddal b. Umar. The entire tradition is fabricated and the one who did so is either Husayn b. Hamdan, who was immoral and a liar, or Muhammad b. Nusayr, who also was unethical and dishonest and the leader of the Nusayriyyah sect. Both of these unscrupulous persons were viewed as influential scholars and at the same time creators of false hadith reports. Incidentally, this concocted

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<sup>203</sup> *Bihar al-anwar*, 53:1-35.

hadith is related in the book *al-Hidayat al-kubra* that is authored by Husayn b. Hamadan Junbala'i; however, eight pages from this false hadith are missing in what has been recorded by Majlisi in the *Bihar*. This suggests that Majlisi did not have access to this work and instead reported the hadith by using a source that was unknown but cites that it was reported by some of the companions.

2. The book *al-Hidayat al-kubra* was published in 1986 C.E. in Beirut by Mu'assasat al-balagh and comprises 439 pages, however, the last section of the book that consists of deviant thoughts of the author are not published; however, one can find them in the manuscript copy that is housed in the library of Ayatullah Mar'ashi Najafi in Qum under the number 2972.
3. There is another hadith consisting of ten pages in *Bihar al-anwar* that talks about Sa'd b. Abdallah's sighting of the Qa'im (Mahdi).<sup>204</sup>

This hadith has unnecessarily occupied ten pages of *Bihar* when the chain of transmission proves that all of them were fabricators. This was carefully examined by Muhammad Taqi Tustari in his work *al-Akhbar al-dakhilah*<sup>205</sup> and proven to have been fabricated with no validity.

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<sup>204</sup> *Bihar al-anwar*, 52:78-88.

<sup>205</sup> Muhammad Taqi Tustari, *al-Akhbar al-dakhilah*, ed. Ali Akbar al-Ghaffari, 5 volumes have been published so far (Tehran: Maktabat al-Saduq, 1976-).

It is likely that the fabricator of this hadith was Muhammad b. Bahr Shaybani whose name is appended to the hadith. Kashshi in his work on *rijal* labels him as an extremist who harbored ill-will and desire for vengeance. Ibn Gada'iri says that this narrator is weak and Shaykh Tusi writes that he has been accused of being an extremist and *mufawwidah*<sup>206</sup> who used to say that God handed over the administration of the world to the Prophet (S) and his family.<sup>207</sup>

4. The next example of a fabricated hadith is 26 pages in length and recorded by Tabarsi in his work *Ihtijaj*. In this hadith, Imam Ali (a) is supposedly responding to a number of queries from the *zindiqs*.<sup>208</sup> It is evident from the text of the hadith that it has been fabricated by a stubborn and bigoted Shi'i traditionist (*muhaddith*) who subscribed to the theory that the Qur'an had been altered with things added and taken out. It is possible that he manufactured this hadith to give credence to his belief with the intention of gaining closeness to God because he viewed his own belief as the only true one. Such a mode of reasoning, of course, is on account of his being inflicted with compound ignorance that leads him to assume that the ends justify the means. Regretfully,

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<sup>206</sup> It refers to those who believe that God has entrusted his full power and authority (*mufawwidah*) to the Prophet and the Imams (a).

<sup>207</sup> *Majma' al-rijal*, 5:62 and 63.

<sup>208</sup> al-Fadl b. al-Hasan al-Tabarsi, *al-Ihtijaj*, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dar al-Nu'man, 1966), 1:358-84.

Tabarsi does not provide us with the source of this hadith to be able to speculate or be certain of the identity of the fabricator. However, it is clear that the person was an extremist (*ghali*).

Incidentally, the author of the Qur'anic exegesis work titled *Nur al-thaqalayn*, who lived in the seventeenth century, has brought the above hadith into his commentary at various points by breaking it down into different parts and inserting them in places that accorded with relevant Qur'anic verses. Under the Qur'anic verse: "Say, 'I am not the first of God's messengers. I do not know what will be done with me or you; I only follow what is revealed to me; I only warn plainly'" (26:9) he has brought forth a portion of the above hadith to prove that this verse is not part of the Qur'an because it constitutes a demerit for the Noble Messenger (S) not to have prior knowledge of the events that are to fall upon him and the Muslim community (*ummah*). The method of interpreting the Qur'an that has been adopted by the author of this exegetical work pays no heed to the truthfulness or the veracity of the hadith reports. What is important for him is that it should validate his own views.

In the aforementioned hadith recorded by Tabarsi in *Ihtijaj*, there is a clear admission of interpolation of the Qur'an in the form of addition and subtraction; however, this claim of the fabricator of the above hadith would never be acceptable. It is also said in the same hadith that the names of the proofs of God (i.e. Imams) have been deleted from the Qur'an and belief in this would constitute admission that things have been

expunged from the Qur'an. Once again, this is not worthy of acceptance.

There is also a mention that the Qur'anic verse "*kullu shay'in halikun illa wajha-hu*" was in reality "*kullu shay'in halikun illa dina-hu*" such that "*wajha-hu*" replaced "*dina-hu*," because it is impossible for everything to perish except the face of God.<sup>209</sup> The fabricator of the hadith report imagined that "*kullu shay'in halikun*," corresponds to the meaning of "*kullu shay'in min Allahi halikun*" whereas in actuality it means "*kullu shay'in ghayri Allahi halikun*," i.e. everything other than God would perish.

The fabricator of the above hadith on the interpolation of the Qur'an is oblivious of the divine promise to preserve the Qur'an from any alteration and distortion as it represents a perpetual miracle of the Prophet testifying to the truthfulness of his claim to prophethood: "We have sent down the Qur'an Ourselves, and We Ourselves will guard it" (Qur'an, 15:9).

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<sup>209</sup> *Bihar al-anwar*, p. 377.



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